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Fifty-sixth session

48th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

**Address by The Honourable Rene R. Harris,
President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Nauru**

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nauru.

The Honourable Rene R. Harris, President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency The Honourable Rene R. Harris, President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nauru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Harris (Nauru): I bid the Assembly welcome from the people of Nauru, the pleasant little island of the Pacific. Let me avail myself of the opportunity to extend to you, Sir, my Government's belated congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Much of the work of the United Nations since the despicable attacks on the United States of America on 11 September has been focused on counter-terrorism, and this is understandable. The Security Council's adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), obligating Members to implement anti-terrorist measures, should

recognize the importance of supporting existing regional initiatives in the fight against terrorism. To this end, we welcome the undertakings by the Security Council Committee on Counter-Terrorism.

The World Bank has predicted that the events of 11 September will exacerbate the already gloomy global economic outlook. Its ripples will be felt across all of the world's regions, particularly in countries dependent on tourism, remittances and foreign investment. It is thus critical that the Security Council allow the competent bodies of the United Nations to assess the costs of extending, expanding or adding new peacekeeping operations before their implementation.

Nauru joins the international community in offering our belated but heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan and the Organization on being the joint recipients of this year's prestigious Nobel Peace Prize. The former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, has to be commended for capitalizing on the momentum generated by the Millennium Declaration.

My delegation is pleased to endorse your proposed agenda, Mr. President, for the fifty-sixth session. The work of the General Assembly should be relevant to the tasks at hand, but at the same time it should address long-standing issues affecting the efficiency and status of this body. Meaningful cooperation between Member States must always be encouraged across the boundaries of religion, ethnicity and culture. The recent World Conference against Racism is a stark reminder of how the work of the

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United Nations will otherwise continue to be frustrated; but the one significant area where the United Nations has made little or no progress is on the question of the reform of the Security Council. We would therefore support a proposal to move the process to a higher level and to deal with the complex issues in a step-by-step fashion.

The last meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum leaders was held in my country a few months ago. The communiqué of that meeting has been circulated as a document of the United Nations. In that communiqué the Forum leaders sought to formalize cooperation arrangements between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum. I would like to take this opportunity to kindly request your support of the relevant draft resolution.

The issues of climate change and sea-level rise continue to be of major concern to my country, and we have repeatedly voiced our deep concern about the adverse impact of human-induced climate change, especially on the low-lying atolls around the Pacific. We have stressed the importance of efforts to build appropriate human and institutional capacity.

The Kyoto Protocol represents a significant step forward on the path to taking action to combat climate change, but unless significant action is taken on a practical compliance regime, there is little prospect of any outcome being enforceable.

Nauru therefore looks forward to participating with the rest of the world in Johannesburg next year to review the progress made since Rio, and it is our fervent hope that the Kyoto Protocol will have come into force by then.

There is a special urgency for Nauru. Economic growth in our small country has been negative for more than a decade, and, as reflected in recent revisions of our classification by the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme, our per capita income has fallen by almost 80 per cent since the 1980s. We look to the international community, the United Nations and its various agencies to assist us through these difficult times and to help secure a safe future for our children.

Our region, the world's very first nuclear-free zone, has a long history of supporting disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, born of the region's harsh experience with nuclear testing by

colonial Powers. The Pacific Islands Forum leaders have again expressed their desire for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Nauru will be depositing its instrument of ratification today, and I call on other States to follow suit.

The trans-shipment of radioactive material and MOX fuel, through our exclusive economic zones is a continuing concern, but we are committed to pursuing our concerns constructively and vigorously at the appropriate political level.

Nauru's commitment to the international effort to combat money-laundering is unwavering. Our Parliament passed anti-money-laundering legislation in August of this year to correct the deficiencies in our regulatory and administrative arrangements. However, Nauru is disappointed not to have graduated from the list of special non-cooperating countries despite the fact that the legislation was drafted in close collaboration with Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) regional representatives. We will nonetheless continue to work on satisfying the key players in FATF on this issue, and we look forward to working with our regional partners under the Pacific regional action plan being developed.

Nauru, along with 20 other Member States, again supported the inclusion of a resolution on the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan on the agenda of the fifty-sixth session. While the attempt failed, Nauru will not be discouraged from continuing its efforts to correct this anomaly. We on Nauru wholeheartedly believe that the Republic of China on Taiwan has a part to play in this Organization, and its people should not be denied a voice in this world body. We note with pleasure the recent admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the World Trade Organization.

Finally, I wish to end my statement by revisiting the issue of security and terrorism. It is indeed sad that as we meet here today, there is a war going on in the world - a war against terrorism. Prior to the horrific 11 September attacks on the United States of America, my Government, at the request of the Government of Australia, agreed to the use of Nauru as a refugee-processing centre. We made this decision on humanitarian grounds. As a consequence, we now have on Nauru nearly 800 asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine — 10 per cent of the whole population of Nauru — along with migration personnel

from the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration and Australia. The asylum seekers are now being processed.

I have taken it upon myself to personally visit the camps from time to time and to mingle with these unfortunate people, and on several occasions have sat down and broken bread with them. I found that they are like you and me. They are brave human beings seeking a better life for themselves and their children and escape from the oppression back home.

The resources of the United Nations need to be augmented to cope with this humanitarian tragedy, and the international community needs to urgently tackle the problem in a coordinated manner, not only in terms of providing assistance and refuge where possible, but also in terms of addressing the sources and causes of refugees, people-smuggling and terrorism. Understanding and responding will not necessarily solve the problem, but it will make it easier for Governments to share in the continuing international effort that will be needed.

Finally, may I say that the good old days, before 11 September, are gone forever, and I shed a tear. The sad part is that we inherited a world that was good from our forefathers. Today, I ask, do we leave tomorrow a better world for our children and our children's children? That I ask. Mr. President, we look to you for leadership on these vital issues.

Thank you. May God bless those in sorrow. May God bless the United States of America. And may God bless the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nauru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Rene R. Harris, President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

The Honourable Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency the Honourable Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President arap Moi (Kenya): I congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for his re-election to a second term in office and for the richly deserved Nobel Peace Prize awarded to him and the United Nations Organization. This is an acknowledgement of his tireless efforts in the service of mankind and, as the Secretary-General has said, of a challenge to do better and, I hope, faster. I would like to assure the Secretary-General of my Government's cooperation and firm commitment in that regard.

The achievements of the United Nations Organization are many and varied, while its increasing relevance in an ever more complex international environment is clear to us. Its objectives are still as valid and noble today as they were 56 years ago and, I believe, can only be achieved by our continued commitment, careful vigilance and firm action.

I would now like to turn my attention to an issue that is uppermost in my mind and that has changed the way we live and do business, maybe forever. I am referring to the terrorist attacks on the United States of America, an important, worthy and respected Member of the United Nations Organization and a long-standing and trusted friend of Kenya.

Terrorism poses a real threat to international peace and security and must be condemned by people of good will throughout the world. Terrorism cannot be justified in any form whatsoever. No philosophy, religion or creed can allow the taking away of innocent lives and the destruction of valuable property. The people of Kenya experienced first-hand the devastating effects of terrorism in August 1998. The attack on Kenya, a country faced with challenges of poverty and underdevelopment, was especially severe and continues to affect us. Kenya understands well the pain of those

affected by the recent attacks in the United States of America and fully supports the efforts being led by the President of the United States of America, Mr. George W. Bush, and his administration to fight terrorism in all its forms.

In order to carry out one of its fundamental objectives, that of the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations, and in particular its membership, must intensify efforts to resolve all outstanding and persistent conflicts raging in many parts of the world. We the Member States of the United Nations must work very closely to ensure that we completely disable the terrorist machinery. We must particularly support the coalition against terrorism.

As an Organization, we must address the issue of conflicts seriously. Conflict situations impede development, provide an atmosphere for the illegal exploitation of resources, the abuse of children, the influx of refugees, the spread of dangerous weapons and the deepening of poverty, to mention just a few aspects. Conflicts steal the dreams, hopes, aspirations and opportunities of many, many people, especially children. We must intensify our efforts in the search for the peaceful and speedy resolution of conflicts.

The conflicts in Africa continue to destabilize our continent. The United Nations and its membership must intensify efforts to find solutions to the conflicts.

The peaceful resolution of conflicts is a fundamental tenet of Kenya's foreign policy. It is a matter of record that I have spared no effort throughout my political career in search of peaceful solutions to conflicts in our region and elsewhere. Currently, Kenya is involved in peace negotiations in southern Sudan, Somalia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would like more international involvement in peace efforts in Africa.

The biggest challenge facing the African continent today is the increasing level of poverty. Poverty has become an obstacle, a roadblock to every effort we are making at improving the overall welfare of our people.

Poverty is a fertile breeding ground for conflict and instability, and even terrorism. It is therefore regrettable that very little progress, if any, has been made since the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. I remind members that the

main outcome of that Summit was the resolve to eradicate poverty as an obstacle to human development.

We cannot succeed in improving the lives of our people without the wholehearted engagement of the international community. The global target of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015 cannot be achieved without tangible availability of resources.

Our efforts at attacking poverty are further undermined by the scourge of HIV/AIDS and other treatable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis, which have the potential of reversing all the socio-economic gains we have worked so hard to achieve.

I applaud the Secretary-General for organizing a special session on HIV/AIDS earlier this year. The establishment of the Global AIDS Fund is a very welcome development. I look forward to its contribution and active participation in our daily struggle against HIV/AIDS. Kenya calls on the international community to lend its full support to the fund.

The effect of marginalization on developing countries posed by the accelerated process of globalization must be addressed as a matter of priority. It is my hope that the Fourth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, will address the issue of the imbalance in international trade more effectively. The issue of meaningful market access, particularly for agricultural products, must be resolved quickly. Protectionist policies are in no country's interest and definitely contradict the principles of free trade and the process of liberalization. In addition, resources must be made available to the World Trade Organization by our partners to enable it to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to developing countries.

Solutions in the form of better terms of trade and market access must go hand-in-hand with the flow of foreign direct investment to developing countries. Many African countries have taken bold initiatives to provide a conducive environment for investors. These efforts need to be supported by clear policies of developed countries to encourage private sector investment in Africa.

We urgently need to be freed from the burdens that are diverting vital resources from our economic development. Debt relief is necessary. It is in our

common interest that our economies be restored to health in a meaningful time frame.

My concluding remarks relate to the desire for equity, fair play and justice for all. This is one of the cardinal objectives of the United Nations. I welcome the efforts that the Organization has made in the pursuit of these objectives.

We welcome these efforts. Yet it is a matter of concern that commitments in the programmes of action agreed upon have not been fully complied with. This situation must be reversed. My challenge to the Organization is that these commitments be honoured so that humanity can feel that the United Nations is truly an organization of hope for many nations and peoples throughout the world. We cannot continue doing what has so far failed. We need to work on new ways of addressing our common problems. My Government stands ready to do its part, and I challenge other Governments to do theirs. Together we shall succeed in meeting our commitments to have poverty reduced by half by 2015.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, MP, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President: I should to draw the attention of members to the fact that a number of statements made in the general debate have gone beyond the 15-minute time limit. This has disrupted the schedule of statements by other speakers as well as the schedule of bilateral consultations. In that connection, and with consideration for other delegations, I should like once again to appeal earnestly to Member States to limit their statements to 15 minutes so that all speakers on the list for each meeting during the remaining five days of the general debate can be accommodated at the projected time and so that bilateral consultations and other planned activities can proceed as scheduled. I thank members for their understanding and for their cooperation.

Mr. Borg (Malta): Allow me to begin by expressing my congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. The fifty-sixth session is clearly going to be a challenging one, and one that I predict will further strengthen the resolve of members to work hand in hand on all the different issues requiring our attention. I would like also to convey my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri for the determined and skilful manner in which he presided over the previous session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations and its tireless Secretary-General on the Nobel Peace Prize that they have jointly and so deservedly been awarded.

This session started in a markedly different manner from those of previous years. The horrendous 11 September terrorist attacks brought home the very real threat of terrorism to each and every one of us no matter what corner of the world we inhabit. International terrorism does not limit its actions to individual countries. In fact, although the attacks were launched on United States soil, the specific targets chosen clearly show the intent to destroy symbols of the modern world, icons to free people everywhere.

Indeed, by attacking this cosmopolitan city and its World Trade Center, the perpetrators targeted us all. Nationals of more than 60 countries met their death in those dastardly attacks. Even if our own nationals were not among those who lost their lives, we all felt under attack. We all felt violated. In one way or another, our lives have been altered forever, and we must respond accordingly.

We must fight the scourge of terrorism with unreserved and unhesitating resolve. We must do this not merely as a means to defend all that we hold dear. We must do it to secure a safer world for ourselves, for those who will follow us and for those who have had their lives irrevocably transformed as a result of these terrorist attacks. That resolve must be our tribute to the innocent and the brave who lost their lives in the 11 September attacks.

The two-month postponement of the general debate has provided us with time to reflect and to act. Malta has joined the international community's absolute and unreserved condemnation of the terrorist acts. We have also stepped up our action in pursuit of the effective implementation of anti-terrorism

measures, including comprehensive compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

Malta was among the first six countries to sign the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, and yesterday became one of the first States to ratify it. On Sunday, Malta also acceded to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents; to the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages; and to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings.

The new realities of today's world have certainly brought to the fore the importance of those conventions on terrorism. At the same time, they have also brought into bold relief the wisdom that underpins the efforts of the international community in its pursuit of the establishment of the International Criminal Court. My Government is politically committed to the Court and will seek ratification of the Rome Statute by the Maltese parliament in the near future. We feel that, in that way, we are doing all we can to ensure that no stone is left unturned in our fight against terrorism.

With each passing day, we witness the domino effect that acts of terror may have at a national, regional and global level. The impact this has on the lives of millions must be addressed. We feel therefore that the time is ripe to conclude the debate on an operational definition of the perpetration of a terrorist act. Intensified efforts aimed at the expeditious conclusion of negotiations on the Indian proposal should subsequently yield a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which will be of benefit to us all. We firmly believe that such an umbrella agreement will give added value to, and further complement, other existing conventions on terrorism. We also believe that the General Assembly should actively consider convening a high-level conference on terrorism under United Nations auspices upon or immediately after the conclusion of such a convention. That would serve to reinforce ongoing international efforts to formulate a collective response to terrorism.

The unity of purpose currently prevailing within the international community in its fight against terrorism is perhaps unprecedented. Indeed, the political will displayed over the past two months is a clear manifestation, if any were needed, that multilateralism remains a vital tool in the conduct of

relations among States at a global level. That political will has also been seen in the other work of the Organization. Allow me therefore to turn to other issues on the agenda of the General Assembly.

I would like first to express my Government's full support for the initiative of the German and French Governments to bring the issue of human cloning before the United Nations. Aimed at drafting a convention banning human cloning for the purposes of reproduction, that initiative has received wide support from all quarters. The concern expressed underlines the fundamental nature of the threat to humanity posed by scientists who are unwilling to accept ethical and moral limits on their work. In responding to the Franco-German initiative, the United Nations will ensure that a strong and meaningful convention can be drafted and adopted within as short a time frame as possible.

The United Nations has already had occasion to exhibit its ability to act swiftly and decisively when the conscience of the international community is heightened. The entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which Malta ratified earlier this year, was made possible by the international community's outrage at the devastating impact of those indiscriminate weapons, whose horrific effects long outlast their military purpose.

Similarly, the seriousness and urgency of the problem of human cloning should expedite the conclusion of an internationally binding agreement on that issue. I have no doubt that the richly diverse beliefs reflected in this room are united in their respect for human dignity and identity, and their concern with the fundamental and far-reaching implications of human cloning.

Other world events continue to pose a threat to the fundamental right of peoples to live in a secure, stable and prosperous environment. The current state of affairs in the Middle East is an example. The dramatic contrast between the optimism apparent at the Millennium Assembly's opening and the escalation in violence over the past few months has made it increasingly difficult for the parties to return to the positions they were in just over 12 months ago.

Malta is convinced that the Mitchell report and the Tenet Plan provide a realistic and readily achievable way out of the spiral of violence that has

engulfed the region. The peace, security and welfare of all the people concerned require that their full implementation be urgently embarked upon. This necessitates the re-establishment of security cooperation between the parties in the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians; the stationing of international observers, preferably from several regions; and an end to all new settlement activity, including so-called "natural growth". Against this backdrop, Malta hopes that both parties will be able to return to the negotiating table with the aim of achieving a just and permanent peace in the region on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Also in the Mediterranean, the situation in Cyprus has remained a cause of concern for over 25 years. We earnestly hope that an early settlement of the Cyprus question will be found. In this connection, we reaffirm our full support for efforts to find a solution on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Progress towards lasting peace and stability in the Mediterranean often appears to unfold very slowly. Events in the Balkans since we met here last year, however, bring fresh hope to us all. The end of the Milosevic era was a clear example of the positive change that can be wrought through the power of the people, signalling a fresh beginning for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and indeed for all the neighbouring independent republics.

In recent months, turmoil and unrest have also threatened to engulf the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Yet the unfolding situation now reveals encouraging signs of the power of diplomacy. International assistance extended to republics in the Balkan region is also indicative of the power within each of us to make our own contribution and to play a part.

Malta feels this onus most strongly and actively seeks to play a role on the international stage that goes beyond the mere limitations of its geographical size. In fact, in keeping with this consciousness, Malta is proceeding steadily towards its objective of acceding to the European Union — a union of like-minded States where we naturally belong, not only politically, but also economically, culturally and historically. Our intention is therefore to become an integral part of the European Union at its next enlargement, enabling us to participate fully in a decision-making process that all

too often carries wide-ranging implications for our country.

Like other candidate countries, Malta is currently negotiating the terms of entry into the European Union in what will be an unprecedented widening and deepening of the Union. Already more than halfway through this process, we are working hard to ensure that Malta is not only well equipped to deal with the challenges of membership but is also in a position to make a significant contribution to the Union. This historic project and the enhancement of Mediterranean cooperation are both of immediate concern to Malta. We feel that they go hand in hand.

An increase in dialogue between all nations and a move towards securing a safer planet are in everyone's interest. However, threats to international security, not least those posed by weapons of mass destruction, continue to lurk in the background. In July this year, Malta deposited its instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Malta hopes that the remaining 13 countries whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to come into force will join the 84 countries that have already done this. Thus a significant collective step will have been taken towards reducing the risk of nuclear disaster.

Not so long ago, the terms "environment" and "international security" in the same sentence would have drawn a perplexed response from most audiences. Today, the link between the two is becoming increasingly apparent. The urgency in addressing the greatest threats to our natural environment was made amply clear in Bonn during the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Despite being faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the international community succeeded in forging the Earth's first major action-oriented response to the phenomenon of global warming.

In this respect, allow me to offer my Government's expression of gratitude to the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Jan Pronk, as well as to my compatriot Mr. Michael Zammit Cutajar, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for their enormous personal efforts to secure a successful outcome. Their success laid the groundwork for the breakthrough achieved at the seventh session of the Conference in Marrakech last week. The agreement on the modalities

of implementation of the Kyoto Protocol has opened the door to its ratification by all States signatories. Indeed, Malta deposited its instrument of ratification yesterday and looks forward to the present momentum being sustained, leading to an early entry into force of this landmark Protocol.

Difficult and complex as it may be to tackle environmental global problems, the most challenging environmental problems are often those in our own backyards. With one of the highest population densities in the world, Malta has achieved a high level of human development without any natural resources at its disposal. In seeking to continue to raise our living standards, we grapple daily with difficult decisions aimed at ensuring that economic development on our islands is environmentally sustainable.

There is no simple trade-off between the protection of the environment and the production of wealth. The Mediterranean Sea, which provides Malta with its economic lifeline, is perhaps the most tangible proof of the fact that economic progress at the expense of the environment is no progress at all. In reaping its bountiful fruits, we know that they are not unlimited and, if not tended to, will dry up altogether. The same applies to other seas and oceans.

With this in mind, Malta yesterday became the thirtieth State to accede to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks — a move that will bring the Agreement itself into force on 11 December 2001. For Malta, having initiated the process that led to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, it is a source of great satisfaction to contribute to the further development of this veritable pillar of international law.

While there is inevitably still more that can be done, both at a domestic and an international level, I hope that this General Assembly session will serve as a renewed impetus for us all to promote everything necessary to make the world safer and more secure. This is our fundamental duty, as political leaders, for the welfare of present and future generations. We must continue to foster social justice, promote equitable development, nurture confidence among peoples, settle conflicts and take the appropriate measures to ensure security for all. Yet in doing all this, Governments and

peoples must ensure that we continue first and foremost to build peace in the minds of men and women. That undertaking, adopted by the generation that survived the Second World War, retains its noble authenticity today as we face the challenges of our own times.

Mr. Cem (Turkey): This meeting is being held at a most difficult hour. The terrorist attacks carried out in New York and Washington, D.C., cast a long shadow over this session of the General Assembly. But we must stand united, drawing the right conclusions from this catastrophe. The date of 11 September has made it clear that terrorism is now humankind's number-one enemy, and that it must be addressed with the utmost seriousness and determination.

We share the American nation's grief. We reiterate our full support to the United States Administration in its efforts to track down those responsible and to bring them to justice. As a country that has lost so many of its citizens to terrorism, Turkey deeply feels the grief of this tragic event.

To combat terrorism efficiently and to develop a strong coalition of United Nations Members against terrorism, certain principles should guide our collective effort. First, terrorism does not have a religion or a geography, and there can be no justification for terrorist acts under any circumstances. Secondly, the use of double standards is the main obstacle to the fight against terrorism. Thirdly, we have to be conscious of the fact that terrorism is a global phenomenon.

No ideal, no cause and no end can justify terrorism. We should avoid spurious justifications for deliberate killing. To identify terrorism with any religion is a sacrilege against all religions. We strongly condemn those who couple the name of a religion with a definition of terrorism or terrorists. To fight this dangerous trend, we fully support all initiatives aimed at dispelling these erroneous approaches.

We commend the ongoing mutual efforts of the United Nations, as well as several other initiatives. In this context, Turkey has proposed an informal forum between members of, and aspirants to, the European Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to discuss, from a political perspective, issues pertaining to harmony among civilizations. We have the initial support of the relevant organizations and of several countries. We hope to hold this conference by February 2002.

Terrorism does not have a geography. The same terrorism manifests itself in different countries all over the world, both in the West and in the East. To be serious and effective, the anti-terrorist struggle has to be all-encompassing and deal with all terrorist centres, activities and logistics. It should address all countries that harbour and tolerate terrorism or that are indifferent to terrorist groups that incite or actively plan, finance or command terrorist operations executed in another country.

Being drawn into the trap of double standards in defining or in dealing with terrorism inherently provides support for terrorism. Unfortunately, we have been witnessing several cases of double standards. I will try to give some views on this particular subject.

There is an unfortunate *de facto* distinction made in the conceptual approaches of several countries between "bad" terrorists, who work against a particular country, and tolerated terrorists, who, while enjoying safe haven in the same country, incite, plan, finance and sometimes command terrorist acts in another. My country, as well as several others, has been victim of this double-standard approach. Groups implanted in foreign countries openly advocate the use of terrorist means under all sorts of pretexts. Their activities and messages — which call for violence, and sometimes for assassination — are freely propagated and are sometimes transmitted through the authorized media in their host countries. In short, acts and calls that would draw an immediate reaction if they were the acts and calls of indigenous terrorists targeting their own country are ignored and tolerated when they emanate from guest terrorists targeting their country of origin. This unfortunate distinction between terrorists that hurt others but not us and the prevailing double standards have to be overcome if we are serious about fighting terrorists.

Terrorism is a global phenomenon that crosses borders, and the fight against it requires effective international cooperation. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) in particular provides a clear road map regarding the steps to be taken. We hope that all Member States will fully comply with this groundbreaking resolution. The establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) is a major development.

We welcome the joint declarations of 14 and 21 September 2001 by the European Union. Turkey aligned itself with both, and we expect their prompt and resolute implementation. The European Union is in the process of identifying terrorist organizations and their support networks. The list of terrorist organizations to be drawn up by the European Union must not be restricted only to the geographical area of its members. It should definitely include those groups that finance, plan and command terrorist activities in other countries.

There is a drastic need for vigilance and further cooperation between the relevant authorities, namely, the justice and interior ministries of all countries. A drastic change in attitude is imperative.

In order for it to be credible and effective, the anti-terror struggle has to be comprehensive and deal with all terrorist centres. It is also incumbent upon all United Nations Member States to adopt the existing international legislation and to review national laws accordingly. International efforts to combat terrorism cannot be fully effective in the absence of a global convention in this field.

The draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism now under discussion in the working group established by the Sixth Committee seems to be our best chance to address this shortcoming. Although all participants have displayed remarkable flexibility, the working group has failed to resolve two central and interrelated issues: the definition of a terrorist offence and exclusions from the scope of the convention. I wish to take this opportunity to call upon all States to make an additional effort towards finalizing the convention.

In combating terrorism, we cannot ignore the fact that this scourge feeds on deteriorating social, economic and political conditions. Illiteracy, destitution, bigotry, racism, social and political injustice and similar sources of grievance all play a role in creating fertile ground for terrorism. The gap between the richest and the least fortunate nations of the world keeps widening at an alarming pace. Threats such as illegal mass migration, corruption, drugs and arms smuggling, money laundering and other types of organized crime are on the increase.

It is our collective responsibility to find lasting, viable solutions to these problems. Developing nations must focus on ways of achieving sustainable economic

growth, on improving income distribution, education and justice and on addressing other social needs. Developed nations must be more forthcoming in debt relief, must increase development and humanitarian aid and must allow greater access to their markets.

Today, the United Nations and its Member States face a mutual challenge. The name of this challenge is Afghanistan, and it has two dimensions: to combat the terrorist network, which, by exploiting the Afghan people's plight, has taken root in its geography; and to support the revival of Afghanistan, of the Afghan identity, by ensuring peace, stability and economic development.

Turkey is resolutely committed to meet this challenge; we fully support the United Nations efforts and those of the Special Representative, Mr. Brahimi. Turkey worked together with the Afghan people from the 1920s to the 1960s; and it resumed cooperation again in the early 1990s. We believe that concerted international action, with sound principles and effective means, is of crucial importance. I will try to elaborate on some suggestions.

First, it is the Afghan people themselves who will rebuild their identity and their country. Our task is to assist and support their efforts — not to dictate who will run their country, and how. In this respect, regional and tribal affinities should be encouraged to merge into a single Afghan identity and assume a secondary role as sub-cultures. This is capital for Afghanistan.

Secondly, all countries, either neighbours of or involved in Afghanistan, should be discouraged from relying on particular Afghan groups as their primary allies and should refrain from pursuing their special interests through those groups.

Thirdly, while the fight against terrorism and its supporters goes on, special care must be taken to ensure that innocent civilians are kept out of harm's way. All humanitarian support should be provided, organized and facilitated.

Fourthly, in regions and cities of Afghanistan freed from terrorist oppression, the United Nations and involved forces should act immediately to ensure security and relief. The success in providing for basic needs and displaying the ability to produce a better future will be paramount in expanding positive changes to other parts of the country. Setting a successful precedent would serve as the best catalyst.

Fifthly, and finally, everyone seems to agree that the future administration and Government of Afghanistan should reflect all ethnicities. It should also encompass all political trends that have not resorted to terrorism. In this process, overemphasizing or undermining the role of any group in the country would be counterproductive. It is evident that in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan, the United Nations has to play a leading role. It is the duty of each and every Member State of the Organization to contribute to this gigantic task.

I will touch upon one more issue, and the rest will be distributed in the paper that I have prepared. This last issue is: Cyprus. The Cyprus issue has remained for 38 years. This subject is one that is known to the United Nations. As the dates for some radical changes in Cyprus through the Greek Cypriot side's unilateral accession to the European Union seem to be suggested, and as Turkey considers these changes potentially dangerous for the two parties and for the whole region, this issue needs further attention. Any artificially imposed solution that is not mutually acceptable to both nations in the island and to the guarantor countries is bound to create a severe crisis. Turkey, as well as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), aspire to a mutually acceptable solution, sought through all possible means.

A unilateral act by the Greek Cypriots, in violation of the 1959-1960 system, and pretending to represent both nations, contradicts the legal framework and the realities of Cyprus. The legal and practical realities do not permit any party in the island to decide unilaterally to enter any international body of which both Turkey and Greece are not members; and any such decision has to be taken mutually by the two co-founders.

Through formal decisions of their parliaments and Governments, both Turkey and the TRNC have declared that they will not accept any solution that is not freely negotiated and mutually accepted. Both Turkey and the TRNC have also made it clear that they reject any such development, which would make the Turkish Cypriots a minority under Greek Cypriot rule. The Turkish Government will not allow the resurgence of a situation that in 1964 and 1974 caused massive crimes to be committed against the Turkish Cypriots.

Turkey and the TRNC are for a solution based on the realities of the island. There are two distinct nations

with different religions, languages and cultures with two separate States and democracies in Cyprus. The confederation proposal of President Denktaş deserves serious consideration. We also support the Secretary-General's Mission of Good Offices and his efforts to start a new phase of talks. In order to succeed, this initiative should depart from sufficient common ground.

Turkey welcomes the recent proposal of President Denktaş to his Greek Cypriot counterpart that they get together informally, without any preconditions, and discuss all relevant issues in order to find a way forward. The refusal of the Greek Cypriot party is in no one's interest.

The tragedy of 11 September can be viewed as an omen of what can happen if the slightest carelessness is shown towards any of the old and new threats the world faces in the modern age, be they terrorism, environment or poverty.

All I have said points to the need for the strong commitment of Member countries to efforts aimed at the shaping of a better future. I point as well to the need to strengthen and streamline the United Nations, with all its principal organs. This General Assembly session of 2001 is a meaningful link in the chain which the international community has forged to meet the growing challenges of the new century. With realism and courage we shall succeed.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joschka Fischer, Deputy Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Fischer (Germany) (*spoke in German; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Only a few moments ago, we were informed of the crash of a commercial airliner not far from here, in Queens. At the moment, we do not know the cause of this disaster, but we are shocked and horrified. I would express to the bereaved families and to the American people our sincere condolences and sympathy.

It has been only two months since thousands of innocent persons lost their lives in the World Trade Center here in New York. Today, we are seeing the extent to which the people here have been affected. In the entire history of the United Nations, there has never been a situation like this one.

Throughout the world, people have expressed their sincere solidarity with and commiseration for the

victims and their families. These horrific terrorist attacks struck not just Americans, but also innocent people from over 80 countries, members of all the major world religions and cultures. They targeted us all. It must therefore be a common concern of humanity to prevent a recurrence of this tragedy or indeed something even worse.

The events of 11 September thrust a dangerous future upon the world. We now live in the terrible knowledge that no country in the globalized world is invulnerable and that enemies within, who are determined to kill and to die, can perpetrate mass murder at any time. This eerie, awful danger has at a stroke dramatically altered the foundations of security policy as we know it. The fight against internationally operative terrorist networks will require new responses from the community of States. International terrorism is a challenge above all for politics, the military, the police and the judiciary, as well as for the economy and — very importantly — for culture. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the issue of peace and security has thus taken on an entirely new perspective.

Mr. Imanaliev (Kyrgyzstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Humanity has rarely been as united as it was on that terrible day two months ago. This unity was born not only of horror and compassion, but also of the realization that we can successfully counter this new deadly threat only if we combine our full force and energy. The day of 11 September was a defining moment that altered the direction of world politics. A new alliance was created. It must now be strengthened and developed into a genuine partnership. If this is achieved, 11 September could go down in history not only as a horrific day for humanity, but also as the beginning of a new era of cooperation and multilateralism.

What drives people to commit these inconceivable crimes and to blow up themselves and thousands of innocents? From where does such uncontrollable hatred come? How can it be curbed? How can it be conquered? It is certain that in any attempt to develop an effective counter-strategy we must, while waging the war on terrorism, analyse the full range of causes and circumstances that permit such hatred and violence to grow.

The United Nations is uniquely suited to the task ahead. It provides the forum required for the creation

of a universal coalition. Only it can give international legitimacy to the response to terrorism. It has at its disposal the instruments to manage political conflicts and the underlying development problems that nurture hatred and despair.

A comprehensive strategy against terrorism must concentrate primarily on prevention. Developing such a strategy means nothing less than drafting a policy for a cooperative world order for the twenty-first century, a policy that no longer tolerates areas characterized by a breakdown of order, a policy that has as its goal a world order under which all peoples can claim their full and equitable share. This includes making economic globalization more socially just for more people and supplementing it with the political globalization so urgently needed.

The Security Council responded to 11 September with rare solidarity and, with resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), took decisions on concrete, internationally binding anti-terrorism measures that point the way ahead. The General Assembly, too, severely condemned the terrorist attacks and called for joint action against international terrorism.

This path must now be rigorously pursued with the rapid and universal ratification and implementation of the 12 United Nations anti-terrorism conventions and the adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We must endeavour anew to bring this project, on which we all place so much hope, to a successful conclusion. I therefore call upon all States that have not yet approved the present compromise to reconsider their position.

The International Criminal Court can also become a valuable instrument in the fight against terrorism. Under article 7, paragraph 1, of its statute, it will have jurisdiction to try cases of murder "when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population". There can be no doubt that the attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania fulfil this requirement. For this reason, I would like to ask you all once again to ratify the Rome Statute as quickly as possible.

The attack on the World Trade Center was a wake-up call to the profound threat to world peace that can be posed by failing States. Areas where political and social order has collapsed offer terrorists a safe haven from which they can organize their murderous networks worldwide. The community of States urgently

needs to take a closer and preventive look at the problem of failing States — but not just in Afghanistan, and not only after a catastrophe has occurred.

No conflict prevention measures have ever been undertaken in Afghanistan. Far from it. This has proved to be a fatal error. For more than 20 years, a humanitarian catastrophe has been playing itself out before the eyes of the world, in which women and children, in particular, have suffered. Civil war, human rights violations and abject misery have also been the nourishing ground for the unprecedented symbiosis between the terrorists of the Al Qaeda group and the Taliban regime.

From there the trail leads directly to the horrific attacks in the United States. As hard as this decision may be, without the use of military means, this threat cannot be averted. We must not forget that the suffering of the people in Afghanistan is above all the work of the Taliban. It was the Taliban that, long before 11 September, increasingly impeded effective humanitarian relief, robbed women and girls of all their rights and actively supported terrorism, also with the goal of destabilizing Arab and Muslim States.

Not to react would indeed be to invite further terror and oppression and would be extremely dangerous for world peace. The dramatic nature of this threat is illustrated by Osama bin Laden's statement that he will not shrink from using even nuclear weapons. Civilian means alone are unfortunately not always enough to put an end to violence and terror. This was the case in the Balkans.

In Afghanistan, too, the root of the tragic conflict is profoundly political, and so the solution, too, can ultimately only be a political one. It must come from within, must reflect the diversity of peoples in Afghan society and must be accepted by the Afghan people. But a peaceful solution also requires assistance from the international community. Afghanistan must not be left alone with its problems yet again.

A clear political and humanitarian perspective for Afghanistan is now crucial. The United Nations should be the coordinating agency for all peace efforts. It is indispensable as the framework for the political process and as the guarantor of internal agreements within Afghanistan. Only a peace process under the auspices of the United Nations will succeed in excluding external involvement in the future and

ensuring a peaceful future for the country in harmony with its neighbours. Germany and the European Union are willing to play their part towards a political solution for Afghanistan and to participate in the long term in the economic and social reconstruction of Afghanistan.

More than anything, the refugees and the civilian population must be helped. We cannot tolerate the fact that the Taliban is hindering humanitarian access and is using the civilian population as a shield. Especially because of the approaching winter, we must do everything in our power to provide the people with at least the most basic necessities and to alleviate their despair and hardship. Is it possible to establish humanitarian protected areas, to use the expulsion of the Taliban from Mazar-e-Sharif and other towns to improve the humanitarian situation, and to make a town like Kabul an open city? Of course this will be very difficult, but let us nevertheless think without taboos about absolutely all ways in which we could help the people. As chair of the Afghanistan Support Group, Germany has issued an invitation to a meeting in Berlin at the beginning of December. I appeal to all States to make a great humanitarian effort now and to come to the aid of the downtrodden Afghan people.

Solving regional conflicts will be of critical importance in the fight against terrorism. The Middle East conflict is a top priority. Our hearts go out to the many innocent victims on all sides. Both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have a right to live free of fear, in dignity and in peace. This is indivisible not only from Israel's right of statehood, as recognized in Madrid — which is, in our view, inviolable — but also from its security. Germany bears a special responsibility towards Israel stemming from its past. Any policy that aims at destroying Israel by means of terrorism or otherwise will face determined opposition from Germany. However, we equally advocate the Palestinians' right to self-determination and their right to their own State, Palestine. In the European Union Berlin Declaration of March 1999 we stated that "the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State on the basis of existing agreements and through negotiations would be the best guarantee of Israel's security". This is truer today than ever before.

Never before has there been broader international backing for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Mitchell recommendations still form the

basis for the timetable accepted by all sides, and in their spirit we call on Israelis and Palestinians alike to put an immediate and lasting end to violence and confrontation, to resume the agreed direct talks without delay and to seriously implement the negotiated ceasefires. These talks must lead to genuine negotiations on a viable political solution.

The real aim of the terrorists is to trigger a clash of civilizations and to inflame the situation in the Near and Middle East. Under no circumstances can we allow ourselves to be drawn into such a conflict. We are fighting international terrorism, not Islam.

We must counter the terrorist strategy designed to bring about the clash of civilizations with a dialogue of cultures and religions. We need a spiritual debate based on mutual understanding that attempts to reach genuine agreement on the fundamental values that unite us. Such a dialogue presupposes the existence of shared values, but also respect for other traditions and differences between peoples. However, one thing must be clear: human rights are universal, not Western values. Consensus was reached on them by the international community of States in the Charter of the United Nations and the human rights conventions.

Any dialogue must build on the universality of human rights. It must be conducted with respect for the dignity of all involved, in tolerance and openness. It must start at home, within cultures themselves. It can bear fruit only if it is pursued free of all constraint. And it has a purpose only if all participants are also ready to offer self-criticism.

The insidious anthrax attacks since 11 September show that the threat from weapons of mass destruction in terrorist hands, which yesterday seemed abstract, is today a real and deadly danger. The community of States must do everything in its power to counter it with a new push for non-proliferation and global disarmament.

The dangers of the dissemination of weapons to non-State groups and of regional arms races require new answers and effective, internationally enforceable criminal sanctions. In the nuclear field, the commitment contained in the Non-Proliferation Treaty to complete nuclear disarmament remains crucial. As regards biological weapons, in view of the acute threat, effective global control mechanisms must finally be created. The Chemical Weapons Convention must be more rigorously implemented. All States are called

upon to participate in the negotiation of an international code of conduct on ballistic missile proliferation.

The fight now beginning against terrorism must build on the awareness that the first world cannot in the long term live secure and safe from the tensions and conflicts of the third world. Almost one quarter of the world population is starving. Ninety-five per cent of those infected with AIDS live in developing countries. Africa is particularly hard hit. At present only a minority of the world's citizens profit from the opportunities for growth offered by globalization and from the use of the new information technologies. This state of affairs cannot be accepted, even by the rich countries — for moral reasons, but also because tensions and conflicts today spread much more quickly and widely than ever before.

The battle against poverty cannot be won unless we take equally determined steps to preserve the natural resources on which life depends. At the coming World Summit in Johannesburg we must make a quantum leap forward towards sustainable development, improved poverty eradication and better management of our natural resources. The Kyoto Protocol must enter into force next year. And we must strengthen the sole advocate of the global environment, the United Nations Environment Programme, institutionally, operationally and financially.

11 September made it horrifyingly clear that the human race will not be able to live in peace and security in the absence of political order at the global and regional levels.

Germany will continue to do its utmost to bring about the strengthening of the United Nations and its capacity to act, so that the world will be a more peaceful, just and humane place in the twenty-first century than it was in the twentieth century. The future belongs to responsible governance for one world, governance based not on hegemonic claims, but on cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism. If together we succeed in implementing such a policy, we will not just ultimately win the war against terrorism but will also be able to eradicate its roots forever.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable John Briceño, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources, Environment, Commerce and Industry of Belize.

Mr. Briceño (Belize): We understand that an American Airlines flight to the Dominican Republic has gone down in Queens. We extend the condolences and the support of my Government to the United States and the Dominican Republic.

That we have forged ahead with the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly and that political leaders have assembled for the general debate mark an extraordinary accomplishment, one that brings great credibility to the United Nations. I applaud and thank all who reside in this great city for continuing their work. Today, more than ever, our efforts and energies should focus on implementing the purposes and principles of our Charter and should inspire hope and confidence in all humanity.

Foreign Minister Han Seung-soo, on behalf of my delegation, I extend congratulations to him on his election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly. The manner in which he has guided our work thus far is outstanding and worthy of our recognition. We wish him continued success as he presides over this Assembly. To the Secretary-General and to the United Nations, we extend congratulations on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Before I proceed, please allow me, on behalf of the Belizean people, to extend to the President and the people of the United States of America, especially to the people of New York City, our heartfelt condolences on the tremendous loss suffered on 11 September.

For most of us, the immediate reaction to this tragedy was one of shock and disbelief. As we joined in mourning the loss of innocent lives, including some of our own nationals, the international community moved swiftly to adopt a number of resolutions here at the United Nations. Through these actions we forcefully condemned acts of terrorism and reached out to the United States of America in solidarity, firm in our support to uphold the principles of justice and the maintenance of peace.

Today, despots feast in the raging rivers of desperation, seeking refuge among the weak, preying upon the vulnerabilities of the less fortunate. Those who are caught in the sweeping currents of poverty, forced to live in a world where a dollar is a luxury, find little hope for a better future and are often abused by those who manipulate them for selfish and destructive reasons. For us, securing a better future for the millions

who live in poverty continues to be our most noble of challenges. *(spoke in English)*

To meet this challenge, the United Nations must remain true to its task as set forth in the Charter and reaffirmed just over a year ago when our heads of State and Government gathered here and adopted the Millennium Declaration. That Declaration outlines various issues critical to the realization of a world with less poverty, death and despair, exhorting the values of freedom, equality, justice and tolerance. We must not allow the events of 11 September to cause us to lose our focus on this righteous undertaking — we must stay the course.

For Belize, the path to fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration begins with addressing the issues of development and poverty eradication. We confirm our support for the Agenda for Development. As a small State working to provide greater opportunities for its people, especially those who live in poverty, meaningful sustainable development is critical and can be achieved only through partnership with the international community. Regional and global cooperation are fundamental components for progress and necessitate a universal acceptance of our shared responsibility to create opportunities for growth and development. Please allow me to say a few words in Spanish.

(spoke in Spanish)

Globalization amply demonstrates our interdependence and the importance of cooperation with the rest of the world based on the principle of mutual respect. Genuine sustainable development requires inclusive and transparent trading practices that allow for the participation of developing countries in the global economy. The geographical location of Belize enables us to participate in the Caribbean Community and the Central American Integration System, which gives us the opportunity to offer different perspectives in the fight against poverty. At the same time, it increases our possibilities for greater participation in all entities concerned with developing innovative mechanisms to efficiently integrate our economies into the global economic system. In this respect, we consider that equitable and participatory cooperation in which our concerns and vulnerabilities will receive the attention they deserve is fundamental.

The twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held last June, brought the international community together to collectively affirm the urgent need for critical action on the part of all stakeholders to combat this pandemic. For us in the Caribbean, the Conference was of special importance. Ranked the second highest region in rate of HIV/AIDS infection after sub-Saharan Africa, Caribbean States are working with their international partners to combat the spread of this deadly disease. Any progress made during the HIV/AIDS special session must be attributed to the collaborative spirit displayed by all those involved, at both the political and technical levels. The inclusion of civil society, as well as the private sector, contributed to the effectiveness of the conference and remains critical to the success of any programme to eradicate HIV/AIDS. We welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to reach out to the entire world community to assist in the establishment of the Global HIV/AIDS and Health Fund, in an effort to help alleviate the suffering of the millions of people afflicted by the scourge.

The protection and preservation of our environment is a major concern to the developing world, as so many of us depend on our natural resources for our survival. The commitments made by the international community for the protection of the environment have not been implemented, and if they are not addressed urgently, the consequences will impact negatively our small dependent economies, as well as the economy of the global community. We attach great importance to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and welcome the successful results of the recently concluded meeting in Marrakech, hoping to see more States ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

In the Central America and the Caribbean regions we perpetually suffer from the effects of natural disasters, with the number and intensity of hurricanes increasing over the last decade. This has been attributed to the effects of climate change caused by global warming. For two consecutive years, Belize has been struck by category-four hurricanes, magnifying the need to protect our environment and minimize our vulnerabilities. It is imperative that we gear our efforts towards creating the necessary mechanisms to reverse and curtail negative actions that contribute to the deterioration of the state of our environment. For this

reason, Belize, along with its partners in the Caribbean region, continues to seek the support of the United Nations for a special regime for the Caribbean Sea.

If we are to speak of shared responsibility for development and the maintenance of peace and security, this year especially we must ensure that everyone be allowed to participate in this global forum. In this light, we continue to appeal to this Organization to consider the right of the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan and allow their voices to be heard in this world institution. Equally, we must continue to advocate recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State.

With respect to our commitment to the development of peace and security, Belize is pleased to report the continuation of dialogue with our neighbour, the Republic of Guatemala. We continue to support all efforts to peacefully resolve our differences.

This year has been designated the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The recently concluded debate on this agenda item produced meaningful discussion on the advantages of diversity and its benefits to human progress. Enhanced by globalization, our actions impact others immediately, creating new realities that require more openness and greater sensitivity to the differences among us. In our country, where seven languages or dialects are spoken and diverse ethnic populations live together peacefully, my delegation welcomes the prospect of increased dialogue among civilizations, one inclusive of all peoples, that will improve upon the understanding of who we are and where we came from. The Secretary-General, in his report on the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, noted the importance of ensuring that the process of globalization be comprehensive and fair. Let us grasp the opportunity given to us through this process to work together as equal partners in this global community, seeking to understand our common objectives while respecting our differences.

The Millennium Declaration recognizes the existing inequalities in our world. Likewise, it offers a comprehensive formula for greater prosperity for all. It directs us towards a collective responsibility through greater partnership among the countries of the world. At this time, when we are faced with new global realities, let us make this Declaration meaningful by

accelerating our efforts to achieve the just objectives of lasting peace and prosperity for all of our peoples.

Mr. Gadio (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Pending further news, I also wish to share in the sadness we all feel on the announcement of an aeroplane crash in Queens.

Through me, Senegal has the pleasure of addressing its warm congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his brilliant election to the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

His election clearly is a tribute to his outstanding qualities as a diplomat and statesman and it also expresses the unanimous recognition of the Member States of our Organization of his country, the Republic of Korea, for its steadfast commitment to the service of universal peace and international cooperation.

I wish to express to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, our deep gratitude for the competence, commitment and spirit of openness with which he discharged his mandate during a particularly heavy year.

Finally, I am happy to reiterate Senegal's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and at the same time to reiterate to him our wholehearted compliments on his historic re-election, the dazzling consecration of outstanding qualities of a man of good will, conviction and vision, who has devoted his life to the noble causes of the United Nations. I also congratulate him on the brilliant recognition he and the United Nations have just received as the Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

He deserves our full support in the pursuit and the achievement of the outstanding work in the area of reform in which he, along with his colleagues, is fully invested to bring our Organization closer to the realities of the twenty-first century.

The terrorist attempts of 11 September, which tragically struck New York, the Headquarters of our Organization, Washington and Pennsylvania, have radically changed our vision of the world and of international relations. My country, Senegal, once again conveys its sympathy to the people of the United States and reiterates its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

Let us say it unambiguously: there is no moral, religious or political cause noble enough to justify

terrorism or its always barbarous manifestations — which all of us without exception must condemn with unwavering unity and with the utmost force.

Senegal is a secular democratic country whose population is more than 90 per cent Muslim; we reject all forms of confrontation between religions, cultures or civilizations. Senegal believes that Islam, like other revealed religions, is a faith of peace and tolerance, and vigorously condemns any equation of Islam with terrorism and any attempt to invoke or use religion for criminal purposes. The massacre of pregnant women and the destruction of buildings occupied by innocent civilians — God's creatures every one — are acts that have no justification in any religion, least of all Islam, whose banner of peace and harmony among men and women, peoples, cultures and civilizations we proudly bear.

Beyond simply condemning terrorism in all its forms, methods and manifestations, the international community must act firmly to eradicate terrorism, its sources of financing and its bases of action throughout the world.

Senegal is committed to that course, which is why His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade took the well known initiative of convening on 17 October at Dakar an African conference against terrorism, in which 27 countries participated. President Wade submitted to that forum a draft African pact against terrorism as a needed complement to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The conference ended with the adoption of the Dakar Declaration against Terrorism, which firmly condemned terrorism in all its forms; reaffirmed our solidarity with all victims of terrorist acts, in particular the thousands of innocent civilian citizens of countries throughout the world who died on 11 September; and invited the OAU promptly to convene an extraordinary session on terrorism to consider, *inter alia*, the draft African pact against terrorism submitted by Senegal with the support of other countries.

Let me make it clear that those who argue that Africa has priorities other than terrorism are surely forgetting that tragedy resulting from acts of blind slaughter struck first in Africa: in Kenya and Tanzania. With bald lack of consideration and respect for African lives, bombers in Nairobi killed 12 United States nationals and 212 Kenyans and wounded more than

3,000 of our Kenyan brothers and sisters. They have never expressed any regret, much less remorse, for their obvious contempt for us. Fighting international terrorism means saying loud and clear that Africans, like Europeans, Americans and all the other peoples of the world, have an equal right to safety, security, stability and peace.

That is the powerful message that His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal wants to echo throughout the world. Let us remember his initiative for a genuine security policy in Africa, along with his initiative to review African debt and his Omega Plan — a genuine African globalization strategy which has now been merged with the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery to form the New African Initiative.

There are years that the long march of history cannot conceal or obliterate, and the past 12-month period is undoubtedly among these; it was extraordinarily rich in events of great importance both for the United Nations and for Africa, the seat of humankind. Thus, within the framework of the fifty-fifth session, the Millennium Summit brought together in this Hall heads of State or Government to, in the felicitous words of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, identify and work to solve the world's major problems.

In an extraordinary convergence of views, world leaders reaffirmed their faith in the United Nations and its irreplaceable mission to protect international peace and security, to fight poverty, to promote economic and social development, to strengthen democracy and the rule of law and to ensure justice and equity among citizens, peoples, cultures and civilizations.

In view of the universality which is the hallmark of the United Nations and which was reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit, Senegal firmly supports the legitimate request of the Republic of China on Taiwan to resume its seat in the Organization and in its specialized agencies. That request is not directed against any State Member of the United Nations; meeting it would be a key contribution to consolidating the ideal of the universality of the United Nations and to the advent of an era of peace and stability in that sensitive part of the world.

Africa remains the region where some conflicts seem to exist in tragic eternity; it is where nearly half of the world's refugees and displaced persons are to be

found; it is the site of 33 of the world's 48 least developed countries. Africa is also the region whose inhabitants are the most appallingly affected by the HIV/AIDS and malaria pandemics. Unquestionably, that enormously disturbing situation calls out to the entire international community and, in particular, to Africans. That is why it is important to implement the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Last July, the African Union was christened at the historic Lusaka summit of the OAU. By that historic act, Africa committed itself, in a proactive and unified spirit, to find African solutions to the many challenges before it, by establishing a modern, viable, open institutional framework that can respond to Africa's emergencies and needs in the new century. Here, I renew my congratulations to my friend and brother Amara Essy, to whom African heads of State or Government have entrusted the task of following Salim Ahmed Salim in shouldering the high responsibilities of the post of Secretary-General of the OAU and of putting in place the new structures of the African Union.

The second major event of the Lusaka summit is part of the same pan-African dynamic: the adoption of a plan for the economic and social development of Africa, known as the New African Initiative — the new partnership for the development of Africa, to which I earlier referred. This has the quality of having been conceived by Africans for Africa on the basis of the merger of two novel projects: the Omega Plan of President Abdoulaye Wade; and the programme for an African renaissance of Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. That joint initiative should help create the synergy needed to eradicate poverty in Africa and to lay the foundations for sustainable economic and social development, which is a prerequisite for integrating the continent into the ongoing process of globalization.

For the first time in the history of plans for the renewal of Africa, an international conference on the financing of the New African Initiative is planned for January 2002 at Dakar. That forum will truly be an African Davos and should make it possible to hold a fruitful dialogue among all development partners that have understood the renewal heralded by the new plan,

which sums up our experiences and symbolizes the hopes of all of us who unconditionally love Africa.

There has been impressive progress in Africa this year with respect to the urgent need to tackle the root causes of the many conflicts that shake the continent and to work peacefully towards their lasting resolution. On the crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Burundi and in Sierra Leone, we are pleased to say that significant milestones have been reached by all actors in the implementation of peace agreements already concluded.

From that standpoint, there is true cause for encouragement in the beginning of an inter-Congolese dialogue in Gaborone, Botswana, and the recent formation, with the help of the incomparable Nelson Mandela, of the transitional government of Burundi for national reconciliation. It is now up to the Security Council to perform all of its responsibilities under Chapter VII of the Charter. These efforts deserve to be intensified and given diplomatic support by the international community through concrete actions to finance strategies for post-conflict peace-building. In the same spirit, it is important to support the efforts of Angola and the Organization of African Unity for the rapid settlement of the conflict in that country.

In light of the debt crisis aggravated by the exponential drop in official development assistance, the international community must explore new ways and means to develop the third world, especially Africa, through, *inter alia*, an increase in direct foreign investment. It is this break with the past — this "epistemological" departure — that our President proposes to Africa and its partners. He argues that the aid/credit couplet, which has been the principal way to finance development in Africa and has led to the impasse we all know, should be abandoned and replaced by an approach that makes Africa attractive and competitive, leading to a massive inflow of private investment, both domestic and international.

The cycle of debt followed by ever greater debt — a cycle that has been described by our President as a scourge similar to the slavery that devastated Africa — should give way to an approach that brings in massive investment in an adequate fiscal and legal environment — investment capable of filling the gaps in priority sectors such as infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, new technologies and access to the markets of developed countries. This

approach, of course, would be part of a strategy of good political and economic governance and unqualified respect for the rule of law, democracy and human rights.

Africa is relying greatly on the results of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization that just opened in Doha; the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, scheduled for March 2002; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, planned for September, to provide innovative solutions to the challenges besetting Africa at the beginning of this millennium.

Looking sadly toward the Middle East, Senegal is following recent developments with great concern and feels solidarity with the Palestinian people in light of the new tragedy. Horrified by the scope of this tragedy, Senegal condemns the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the intensification of acts of violence against innocent civilians. Senegal addresses an earnest appeal to all the parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union, the Security Council and the international community, for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian areas; for the immediate cessation of all acts of violence and provocation; for respect for the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the relevant United Nations resolutions; for the resumption of peace negotiations in accordance with the agreed timetable; and for the conclusion of an overall settlement agreement that is just, durable and in conformity with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council.

Peace cannot prosper nor can the development of the region be ensured so long as Israelis and Palestinians fail in their efforts to forge bonds of confidence, as sovereign States within internationally recognized and guaranteed borders. I am happy to note that the European Union and the United States have recently affirmed this, inasmuch as Israel and the future State of Palestine each have the right to exist, to live in peace and to develop in security and dignity.

I wish to conclude by saying that the consolidation of the rule of law and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms remain one of the major focal points of our national and foreign policy. The special importance that our President attaches to these matters has been eloquently

expressed in the appointment of a woman to the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held, despite all obstacles, and dealt with its agenda despite the complexity of the issues and the particularly difficult conditions under which the negotiations took place. My country, which had the honour to preside over the work of the Preparatory Committee, once again addresses a solemn appeal to all actors in international life to translate the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at Durban into action. Thus, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world can be definitively freed of the scourge of racism, which represents a grave infringement of human dignity and a flagrant violation of human rights.

Speaking of human rights, we also naturally think of the rights of women and children. The twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly, planned for 8-10 May 2002, will adopt a new agenda for the international community aimed at better ensuring, safeguarding and defending the rights of the child and promoting the Convention on that subject. The commitments to which our Governments will subscribe must be implemented, as must the conclusions of the Fourth World Youth Forum of the United Nations system, held in Senegal in August this year.

It is imperative that we face the challenges of peace and development. We have no other choice but to do so through multilateralism and universalism. Thus the world needs the United Nations, an organization that is universal and unique. This is the conviction of Senegal, which proclaims that a United Nations that is well restructured and more representative would be better equipped to face the challenges that humanity confronts today. Those challenges seem as immovable as mountains, but everything is possible in a world of solidarity, brotherhood, security and respect for the sacred character of human life, dignity and the inalienable right of all peoples to happiness and liberty.

Mr. Ásgrímsson (Iceland): Once again, we have witnessed a terrible incident in the neighbourhood of the United Nations here in New York. Although we do not know the circumstances, we are shocked, and it is clear that many have lost their lives. I express my sincere condolences to all those who have lost their loved ones in this tragic incident.

Allow me to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I am confident that he will guide us wisely through the complex tasks ahead of us in this session.

The ability of the United Nations to act swiftly in response to acute crisis was seriously tested following the terrorist attacks on the United States. During these trying times, it has been valuable to have at the helm a Secretary-General who enjoys such wide support.

Let me congratulate the Secretary-General and the United Nations on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize — in my view, a well-deserved recognition of Kofi Annan's leadership and of the dedication he and his staff have put into upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Hopefully, the award will serve as an inspiration as well as strengthen worldwide support for the United Nations and what it stands for.

The tragic events of 11 September have radically challenged and changed our security environment. Fighting terrorism should therefore become a priority of the United Nations. We recognize that the United Nations has long been active in the fight against international terrorism, but we now need to go beyond political statements and become truly operational. This means developing new methods and, at the same time, making full use of all the means at the disposal of the United Nations system, the truly global character of the Organization and the numerous international legal instruments available to us.

Iceland strongly supports the creation of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and hopes that an agreement can be reached on such an instrument during the fifty-sixth session. Otherwise, we will lose the opportunity to develop the coherent strategy lacking today. We cannot fail to react.

The key role the United Nations should play in fighting international terrorism must be an impetus to us to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Iceland is seriously concerned about the slow progress made towards reaching this goal. It is essential and timely that the membership of the Council becomes more representative, and thus more likely to sustain the present international coalition in the fight against terrorism. It goes without saying that the efficiency of the Council must be secured. Enhancing transparency

in the decision-making process is also of importance, especially for non-member States.

One of the main purposes of the United Nations is to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. This continues to be of the utmost importance. Let me therefore make it absolutely clear that the fight against terrorism is not, and must not become, a fight against any religious or ethnic group. We must avoid all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. Most importantly, we must at all times adhere to the basic values of human rights, freedom and democracy.

Turning to the actions at the national level, Iceland is taking the necessary steps to ratify all relevant United Nations conventions against terrorism that we have not already ratified. Furthermore, Iceland has implemented all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1373 (2001). But in fighting the menace of international terrorism — a fight that we all agree needs to be both wide-ranging and forceful — we must, at the end of the day, not in any way undermine the basic values of our societies — those of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. We need to strike a balance between freedom and the security measures we opt for.

Uprooting terrorism in the world must go hand in hand with solving regional conflicts that threaten international peace and security. This is particularly true for the Middle East. By prolonging the violence and refusing to negotiate, both sides play into the hands of extremist elements that want neither a continuation of the peace process nor a political solution to the Middle East conflict. Both parties have to resume negotiations unconditionally. That is the only way to secure lasting peace in the region, which should be based upon the establishment of a viable and democratic Palestinian State and on the right of the Israelis to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. A continuation of the present dire conditions cannot be tolerated any longer.

I said earlier that the events of 11 September have made United Nations reforms even more urgent. The same is true for the ongoing work to strengthen the peacekeeping capabilities of the United Nations. Until now, Iceland's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations has been modest. My country

has participated in peacekeeping by providing civilian personnel such as gender experts and police and health professionals. With the changing and more complex nature of peacekeeping, the need for civilian personnel has been increased. The Icelandic Government decided last year systematically to increase its contribution to peacekeeping. Our aim is to provide more personnel to the United Nations, as well as to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union.

By adopting resolution 1325 (2000) last year, on women, peace and security, the Security Council recognized the importance of incorporating a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations. When the United Nations becomes involved in peace-building and reconstruction in Afghanistan we have to make sure that resolution 1325 (2000) is honoured in the process, for the benefit of Afghan women and, as a result, for the Afghan population as a whole. The United Nations must play a key role in the nation-building process in Afghanistan. Iceland stands ready to contribute civilian experts should the United Nations become involved in a post-conflict operation.

Next year, 10 years will have passed since world leaders met at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. We are asked, what has been accomplished in this past decade to secure the prosperity of future generations in harmony with nature? The truth is that there has been rather little progress and that we face enormous tasks. The world community will look towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, for further commitments by all nations.

In that context, I would like to quote Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who in his opening remarks at the 44th meeting, last Saturday, said

"We must put the issue of sustainability where it belongs, in the centre of the policy-making process."

It is therefore imperative that we renew our strong commitment to sustainable development at the Johannesburg Summit. We are faced with new challenges, but also with new opportunities, namely, to build a global partnership to harness the forces of globalization in favour of sustainable development.

The world community has just achieved, in Marrakech, a milestone agreement on the

implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto negotiations have been especially difficult. Now we have reached the moment when we can bring the Protocol into force. But more needs to be done to include other key emitters of greenhouse gases in the battle against climate change.

In the area of oceans — the foundation of human life — we have made some progress. We have adopted significant agreements, and we are looking at ways to improve the assessment of the state of the oceans in order to further enhance marine protection and management. New knowledge and new approaches are also evolving, thus providing the world community with opportunities to improve protection of the oceans and the sustainable use of their living resources.

Last October, Iceland, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Norway, hosted the Reykjavik Conference on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem. In a document adopted by the Conference, States declared that they would incorporate ecosystem considerations into fisheries management with the aim of reinforcing responsible and sustainable fisheries in the marine ecosystem. This Reykjavik Declaration is a landmark contribution of the fisheries nations to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. We trust that we will see the spirit of the Declaration reflected in the results of the World Summit in Johannesburg.

The time has come for a unified effort by political leaders, as well as by civil society and the private sector, to reverse the trend of marginalization and underdevelopment. That is why the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Mexico next year, offers an unprecedented opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of people throughout the developing world. The outcome of the Conference should focus on the great challenge of poverty eradication, as well as on how responsibilities between the developed and developing countries should be shared. We should, however, never lose sight of each State's primary responsibility for its own development. The importance of responsible national governance and respect for human rights cannot be overstated.

My focus, like that of many speakers before me, has been on the fight against international terrorism. Fighting international terrorism involves all States and international as well as regional organizations. We

must concentrate on the available instruments of each organization and find ways to adjust them as necessary. Furthermore, we need to ensure consistency and complementarity of international efforts.

The malicious acts of 11 September and the latest shocking news of the suspicion of biological terrorism demonstrate that all of our concerted efforts are not only necessary but also crucial to fulfilling our duty to protect the lives of our citizens.

The United Nations was founded to preserve peace and to work for a better world. Terrorists are fighting against everything the United Nations stands for. Fighting against them means fighting for the United Nations, for the future of our civilization and for all humankind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): I am speaking here while still in shock over the terrible aeroplane crash in Queens, our immediate neighbourhood, especially since the area of Rockaway, where so many brave New York firefighters live, was already suffering in the aftermath of the earlier catastrophe. I wish to express my deep sympathy to all those families and to the great number of people affected by this tragedy.

Let me at the outset congratulate His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to this high office. While assuring him of my delegation's full cooperation and support, I am confident that under his guidance and leadership — which he has already proven in the first days of his new function — this session of the General Assembly will contribute to strengthening global cooperation and its indispensable platform, the United Nations, in the coming months.

I should also like to take this opportunity to reiterate my very best wishes to the Secretary-General on his appointment to a second term of office. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate him very warmly on being awarded, jointly with the United Nations, the Nobel Peace Prize, an honour and recognition he truly deserves for his leadership, dedication and courage in the service of our Organization. This award also signals recognition of and encouragement for the United Nations and all those who are committed to its mission, not least United Nations staff members.

Allow me to also express here our thanks to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the many efforts he undertook not only in conducting day-to-day business, but also in revitalizing the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly.

My colleague, the Foreign Minister of Belgium, has already addressed this Assembly on behalf of the European Union. Austria fully endorses his remarks.

Two months have passed now since the heinous terrorist attacks of 11 September. Although we are still in shock at the loss of thousands of innocent lives, we have, however, also been encouraged by the resolve expressed in the collective response of the community of nations, here in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. This unanimous strong reaction gives us hope that today our nations are ready to cross over a threshold, leaving behind a world of deadly divisions and entering a genuine global community.

There are some positive signs to that effect. These are, first, that during the past weeks, we have witnessed new astonishing political — maybe even geopolitical — alignments that, if followed through, are comparable to other watershed events of historic proportions. Secondly, the menace of an unprecedented, devastating type of terrorism is compelling us to take a fresh look at the root causes of much that is unacceptable in our world, according to our own standards, but which we have been tolerating, or at least living with, quite contrary to our declared principles. I refer to the abject levels of poverty, inequality and injustice. These factors are at the origin of many conflicts around the globe. Some of them are particularly dangerous, providing breeding grounds for global terrorism or serving as pretexts for terrorists. It would be irresponsible if we — the international community — did not engage in renewed efforts to find solutions to these regional conflicts, be they in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in Kashmir, in the Caucasus or in the Balkans, as well as in the area around the Great Lakes, for instance, which has seen so much human suffering.

The European Union, on a continent marked by centuries of war, has developed its model of conflict resolution. It is held in three words: cooperation, partnership, integration. The European Union is engaged in a welcome policy of extending this zone of peace. We hope that the enlarged Union, planned to

become a Union of 28 and later more, will be able to contribute more effectively to peace and stability in the world.

Under the present circumstances, Austria's priorities outside Europe are the Middle East and Central Asia, not least because these areas have a direct bearing on the fight against terrorism in its present phase.

The Middle East conflict has been on our agenda without interruption since the time of the creation of the United Nations. There is no doubt that we have a special obligation to contribute to a just and viable solution. A heightened sense of responsibility is felt when, on the one hand, violence escalates, but when, on the other — as I see it — new opportunities have emerged. Austria is therefore of the opinion that major concerted efforts should be undertaken so that negotiations can resume on the basis of Security Council resolutions without delay. Only sincere negotiations and a sincere renunciation of violence can bring a rapprochement of the two parties and, finally, peace.

Afghanistan is a reminder of what happens when a conflict is neglected too long. Now, there is a new dimension unfolding. We are forced to act. The humanitarian tragedy is obvious. In this context, Central Asia deserves increased attention, for example, in view of assistance in the maintenance of stability and concertation aiming at the necessary reconstruction of Afghanistan.

I should like to say a word as to the Balkans, a neighbouring region to my country. It must not be neglected, although new dangers emerge elsewhere. In the western Balkans, there is progress, especially in Zagreb, in Belgrade, in Tirana and in Sarajevo, but overall stability and economic recovery are not yet assured. Extremists have not yet disarmed. We have to keep up a high profile of international commitment.

Combating terrorism is, of course, not a one-dimensional task. It requires cooperation on many fronts. I see the United Nations as playing a key role in this regard. This requires a clarification and coordination of tasks within the United Nations system so as to ensure the necessary synergy. There is also a role for regional cooperation. To provide an example, a so called regional security partnership has been established between Austria and some of its neighbours, candidates for European Union

membership, across the boundaries that, for half a century, divided Europe.

Overall, we must address long-term societal development at the local, national and global levels and the capacities required to build a universally shared political culture based on respect for human rights and human dignity, including for the plurality of identities at all levels of society.

Let me elaborate now on the United Nations role. The time has certainly come to significantly strengthen the United Nations capabilities and programmes in combating and preventing terrorism. The complexity of the challenge requires intersectoral and inter-institutional cooperation. We have to enable the principal organs of the Organization, including their specialized subsidiary organs, such as the Security Council's Committee on terrorism, the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism, the Economic and Social Council's Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the appropriate Secretariat units to perform the tasks that are now urgently needed.

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice will hold a special meeting on terrorism in the context of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice on 15 November 2001. Just one week prior to the terrorist attacks of 11 September, plans of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration were adopted. They will play an important role in the system-wide response to international terrorism, including a comprehensive set of recommendations for both national and international action. These recommendations stress once more the existing relationship between terrorism, on the one hand, and crime, including transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking, on the other.

The United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention and its Terrorism Prevention Branch have received a focused mandate, which should serve as a solid basis for enhancing the capabilities of the United Nations in the prevention of terrorism. To this end, the human and financial resources should be strengthened accordingly.

Needless to say, the challenge of terrorism requires the full support of each and every Government. Ratification of the various international legal instruments, as well as the conclusion of negotiations concerning a comprehensive international

convention against terrorism, are of fundamental importance. The Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations should also get immediately active in providing, where requested, concrete assistance to Member States in implementing national legislation required by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), as well as in national capacity-building.

Several items on our global agenda have reminded us of the fundamental importance of the individual citizen and of society in economic, social, cultural and institutional development. Increasingly, we have understood the strategic role of the basic principles and values of our societies upon which the future of mankind is based. Our rejection of terrorism must be absolute. At the same time, we need to strengthen our networks and skills in dialogue, cross-identification and solidarity.

We do need a globally shared political culture that is based on respect for global diversity, which finds its only limits in the right of others to diversity. We must never allow fanaticism, violence and terrorism to undermine the fabric on which peace and security are built. Now more than ever, we have to redouble our efforts in the development of our societies based on plurality and trust among peoples and cultures.

In this context, the Secretary-General's efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations, an initiative of President Khatami, can have enormous significance. Austria had the pleasure of inviting the Secretary-General's Group of Eminent Persons for its first meeting in Vienna and was honoured by the Secretary-General's personal participation in last summer's Salzburg dialogue among civilizations. Austria's commitment to dialogue has found its expression in a series of inter-religious encounters, especially between Christianity and Islam, over the past 10 years. These encounters have served to identify common values and to project them into the wider communities. For us, such dialogue has the core objective of developing societies' capacities in preventing hatred, disintegration and politically motivated violence against fellow citizens.

Austria's efforts have also focused on another element of societal development. Long-term strategies of terrorism prevention require a globally shared culture of human rights. Let me mention briefly the growing cooperation between qualified regional

institutions for human rights education and learning in Africa, South Asia, the Far East and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America. The proclamation of human rights cities in all of these regions might merit specific attention by the appropriate organs of the United Nations, including the Commission on Human Settlements.

We are aware that there is a direct relationship between the internal negation of human rights, on the one hand, and a culture of violence that may eventually project its effects not only internally but also internationally and even globally. In view of accelerated globalization and worldwide economic, cultural and information relations, we may have to take proactive measures to strengthen our shared basic beliefs and political values through education and learning processes. The current United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education might also offer opportunities for appropriate initiatives in response to the horrifying scenario of global terrorism.

In this context, we have to give greater recognition to the role of women in providing human security and human development in all our societies. The recognition is due in particular in crisis areas where women have not only been the victims of most of the intra-societal violence, but have also assured the survival of the neediest.

A case in point is Afghanistan and Afghan society. Eighty-five per cent of refugees and internally displaced persons are women and children. In fact, those who are often depicted as the weakest element in society had to bear the brunt of violence and repression. As we design our programmes for reconstructing a post-terrorist Afghanistan, we must conceive of programmes by which women, in particular those now in refugee camps, are enabled to contribute their share in a governance of development, peace and cooperation. This is essential for a society that wishes to overcome the scars of decades of conflict and war. To be concrete, I therefore suggest that education and training programmes aimed at empowering women — in particular, those in refugee camps — to assume public responsibility in the reconstruction of their country be immediately implemented.

The media bear an increasingly important responsibility in shaping societies' value structures and capabilities. As Austria's Federal Chancellor Wolfgang

Schüssel said in his statement on the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations at the General Assembly's 42nd meeting, Austria is taking an initiative, in the context of the partnership between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries, that will focus on the special role and responsibility of the media in this partnership and in the societal development towards accepting and benefiting from the plurality of cultures and identities in this region.

In conclusion, I should like to make a few comments on other very important developments with regard to items on our global agenda. The sustainable use of the local, national, regional and global natural resources with which we are endowed continues to be of foremost importance. The recent study by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) on the projected dramatic reduction of agricultural productivity — between 45 and 55 per cent in Africa, India, southern China and Latin America — over the next 50 years due to climate change reminds us that the processes of long-term global change need as much action as our activities in coping with crises and combating criminal terrorism. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg will need not only a technical but also a political focus with an appropriate resolve for our shared global development.

One specific area where newly shared policies and institutional support may be required, is the integration of energy policies into the global sustainable development agenda. The Commission on Sustainable Development at its ninth session and the third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries recognized the strong connection between energy-policy interventions and poverty reduction. Energy considerations should therefore be fully integrated into the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Vienna, which hosts four prominent international organizations in the field of global energy policies — the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and IIASA — could offer, with Austria's support, a framework for developing an innovative platform in this regard. I look forward to exploring this issue further with interested partners.

With many developing regions having to cope with the difficult and often precarious management of mountain resources, we should take advantage of the

International Year of Mountains, 2002, for new initiatives in exchanging experience and for new programmes of cooperation.

Finally, we are still working on implementing our resolve to strengthen the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations for accomplishing its important tasks. The Economic and Social Council reform paper by the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs contains, I think, very valuable contributions to our ongoing debate. As Austria already suggested years ago, coordination and integration of the United Nations system's reporting in economic and social affairs and the preparation of a comprehensive "state of the world" report by the Secretary-General would not only facilitate but significantly enhance the role of the Economic and Social Council in policy formulation in this field.

When coping with the dynamic processes of global change in the economic sector, we have to put the human being back into the centre of our policies. New efforts have to be undertaken to internalize the multiple dimensions and costs of globalization. In this context, let me especially welcome the Secretary-General's initiative of a new partnership with the global business community, inviting it to share in the responsibility for what is happening in the global public space.

All the concerns I am addressing in this statement have a common focus: understanding the human being as an actor, a perpetrator, a victim and a partner, in other words, as the basic paradigm of global development. This is why human development, human rights and human security are the points from which we have to address both the current crises and our long-term development objectives.

Mr. El-Khatib (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me express our deep sadness at the human loss resulting from the crash this morning of an American aircraft in a Queens neighbourhood and our condolences to the families of the victims.

I wish to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo and his friendly country on his election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Let me also pay tribute to his predecessor for his able stewardship of the last session.

Furthermore, I extend warm congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his re-

election for a second term of office, as well as on his well-deserved award, jointly with the United Nations, of the Nobel Peace Prize. That was an acknowledgement of Mr. Annan's remarkable track record in serving the purposes and principles of the Charter and a symbolic token of recognition of the centrality and relevance of the vital role of the United Nations in the world community.

This great city which hosts our world Organization and the United States of America and its people have been struck by a cowardly terrorist attack that targeted innocent civilians. In truth, this act of aggression was committed not just against the United States but, in fact, against the entire international community and humanity. For it seems that the larger objective of the evil and dark forces that planned and executed those atrocities was the terrorization and intimidation of all of us and the precipitation of a worldwide cultural and religious confrontation. Their aim was to undermine and shatter our sense of common confidence and the bonds that unite us by stripping us of our own sense of security and driving us to deal with each other in an atmosphere of mistrust, fear and hatred.

One of the many painful impacts of those terrorist attacks is the demonstration of the depth of interdependence in our modern life. The repercussions went beyond the United States. The victims belonged to dozens of nations, including Jordan, and all of us almost instantly felt the negative economic effects.

Thus the fight against terrorism should be comprehensive. This means forging a unity of purpose and determination to win this war on all fronts. It also means exercising care and caution so that we do not fall into the trap set by the terrorists. Indeed, our war against terrorism is neither a religious war nor a clash between one civilization and another — or even between one nation and another.

Last 11 September, Jordan reaffirmed its long-standing and clear position, which is anchored in its firm policy of rejecting the use of terrorism in international relations, irrespective of any argument advanced, pretext invoked or label given. Thus, His Majesty King Abdullah II declared Jordan's categorical condemnation of the terrorist attacks perpetrated against the United States and Jordan's support for the international effort against terrorism. In the same vein, His Majesty expressed resolve to safeguard the sanctity

of the Islamic faith from any abuse or distortion caused by terrorism or terrorists, insisting that terrorists must be deprived of any opportunity to hijack religion and to misuse it to serve their purposes or advance their agenda. In particular, terrorists must be barred from provoking a confrontation between Islam and the rest of the world.

The suppression and defeat of those pernicious schemes require, among other things, the enhancement of understanding among peoples and cultures. They also demand a genuine respect for cultural diversity. Human pluralism should, ideally, be a force of enrichment and inspiration for the community of nations. The world is perhaps pressed now more than ever to launch a meaningful dialogue among civilizations that highlights common denominators with a view to promoting tolerance and reinforcing our ability to coexist and interact in peace and harmony. The United Nations system remains the appropriate framework and venue for such a dialogue.

Islam and Muslims throughout history have enriched human civilization. The contributions of Muslim scholars in science, literature and culture in general reached the heights they did due to a climate of open-mindedness, tolerance and pluralism established by Islam.

We in Jordan take pride in the true coexistence and integration of our community life, which has been fashioned over the past 14 centuries. Muslims and Christians live side by side in national unity, where religious pluralism is an enriching factor, making Jordanian society a good example of social harmony and interaction.

Terrorism will exploit political, economic and social imbalances and the absence of justice to advance its goals. Therefore, addressing the main causes of despair, frustration and sense of injustice in a serious manner is perhaps the most effective way to confront terrorism and pre-empt its potential appeal and support.

We recognize that a truly effective international effort to eradicate terrorism primarily requires, as far as the Middle East region is concerned, a just and acceptable resolution of the question of Palestine, whose long-running implications on the ground remain the chief source of pain and suffering across the region.

The current situation of constant killings and destruction as a result of Israel's practices of using

force against the Palestinian people and the siege of their towns and communities constitute a constant incitement that feeds escalation in a way that endangers security and stability throughout the whole region.

Jordan firmly believes that the resolution of this conflict will not be possible by the use of force or by security and coercive measures. There is really no alternative before the two sides but to return to the negotiating table as equal partners and to seek a settlement that ensures their legitimate rights and their future. This option will remain elusive until parallel mutual steps are adopted on the basis of the accords and obligations agreed upon by both the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

His Majesty King Abdullah II has been engaged in enormous efforts to help the region break out of the vicious circle engulfing it because of the ongoing confrontations between the two sides. King Abdullah has contributed positively to the intense international contacts and efforts to achieve that goal. Those endeavours have indeed led to the building of a full international consensus on the requirements needed to break the current deadlock. Those requirements include, in the first place, ending the use of the Israeli military machine against the Palestinian people, lifting the blockade imposed on them and abandoning the policy of assassinations and incursions into areas under the control of the Palestinian National Authority.

Implementing those steps would set out an appropriate entry to start the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell Commission, the thrust of which is to create favourable conditions that allow return to the negotiating table.

Ten years after the Madrid Peace Conference, the region is seething with frustration over the failure to reach the long-awaited peace. People there are no longer satisfied by the mere existence of a peace process. Therefore, the revival of the peace process in itself is no longer tenable in the absence of a genuinely meaningful effort that translates into concrete progress on the road to peace.

Prolonged confrontations have resulted not only in the failure to carry out several obligations agreed upon, but also in retreating from undertakings that were already in place. This demonstrates that phased and interim agreements are inadequate and ineffective to address the status quo. Therefore, starting the final status negotiations has become now a pressing priority

in order to achieve the principal objective of the peace process, namely, the fulfilment of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their viable independent State in their homeland, as well as the guaranteeing of the security of Israel.

Peace that can be acceptable to the peoples of the region must be comprehensive in terms of resolving, on the one hand, the whole array of major issues: the occupied territories, Jerusalem, the refugees, security and weapons of mass destruction, and economic cooperation; and including on the other, all tracks and the States concerned.

Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) remain the basis of the peace process. Their implementation requires putting in place the true components of peace: primarily, the renunciation of the settlement policy which contradicts the "land for peace" principle and which is in itself a flagrant breach of international law. Peace and settlements are mutually exclusive.

Holy Jerusalem is key to peace. It is an occupied Palestinian territory subject to the application of resolution 242 (1967), which aims at achieving Israeli withdrawal therefrom and from the rest of the Palestinian territories — occupied in 1967 — so that Jerusalem will become the capital of the State of Palestine. In addition, an appropriate formula will have to be worked out to ensure that the entire city of Jerusalem will be open, freedom of worship for all will be safeguarded and the city will be a factor of unity and reconciliation among all believers in God.

The issue of refugees represents the worst form of injustice and frustration in the conflict. Justice must be secured for the Palestinian refugees in order to eliminate the greatest source of frustration and suffering in the region. Jordan, time and again, has made clear its firm position in relation to the question of refugees here in the Assembly. Let me emphasize that Jordan will accept only a solution to the question of refugees that takes fully into account its rights and interests as a State, as well as the rights and interests of its citizens, on the basis of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions.

Lack of trust between the two sides precludes their ability to achieve any progress without an active involvement by a third party. Jordan welcomes President George W. Bush's announcement endorsing a solution that ensures the existence of two States,

including the establishment of a Palestinian State on the Palestinian territory currently occupied by Israel, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. This announcement completes the international consensus on the fundamental requirement for achieving peace in the region. It is our hope that the United States efforts will continue with support from the countries of the European Union, the Russian Federation and the international community as a whole in order to reach that goal.

A comprehensive peace must include Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian territories to the border of 4 June 1967 and the completion of its withdrawal from the remaining occupied Lebanese territories on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions.

The suffering of Iraq and its people, due to the international sanctions imposed against them for more than 11 years, is yet another source of frustration and tension in the region. Jordan once again stresses the need to lift those sanctions and the importance of creating conditions that will allow Iraq to reclaim its active regional and international role. Jordan also emphasizes the importance of completing the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including those relating to Kuwaiti prisoners and other missing persons.

We hope to see an end soon to the plight of the people of Afghanistan so that that nation and its political forces can agree on a form of government to represent it. We also hope that the world community will mount a genuine effort to assist the people of Afghanistan in facing the tragic economic conditions that have been afflicting them for many years.

At this juncture in human history, when we are seeing a surge in global challenges, it becomes even more imperative to rally around the United Nations and to comply more faithfully with the purposes and principles of its Charter, especially those relating to the peaceful resolution of disputes on the basis of international law.

It is also important not to abandon our collective goals in terms of promoting peace, economic development and respect for human rights. This trilateral platform of action represents Jordan's domestic and foreign agenda.

Our relentless pursuit of a just peace in our region has not disrupted our determined efforts to seek economic, social and political development. To the contrary, Jordan is now poised to embark on a new, integrated enterprise that seeks more economic growth in order to improve the living conditions of its population and to open up new vistas of hope and promise for our future generations. Indeed, the dignity and welfare of the individual must always remain the noblest goal of our national and international endeavours.

The Acting President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Manuel Inocêncio Sousa, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Mr. Sousa (Cape Verde) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me to join the delegations that preceded me in congratulating Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to preside over the proceedings of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, being held at an especially complicated moment in international life. His long and brilliant career as an eminent diplomat and distinguished statesman in his country assures us that his term as President of the Assembly will be a productive one, as has been clearly evident since this session was convened. I assure him that he can count on the full cooperation of the delegation of Cape Verde.

To his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, I wish to express our recognition of the skill and efficiency with which he managed the major global issues that came before this lofty forum during the previous session, particularly during the Millennium Summit.

My delegation is also pleased with the re-election of Mr. Kofi Annan as Secretary-General of the United Nations. The unanimity of his re-election reflects the tremendous prestige he has gained in the international community because of his vision, as well as the trust placed in him to pursue the reforms under way and to consolidate the prestige of the United Nations.

Like the delegations that preceded me, I also wish to take this opportunity to reiterate my congratulations to the United Nations and its Secretary-General as joint recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, an award that reinforces their moral authority, so necessary in these turbulent times. This distinction, both well-deserved and heartening, helps emphasize the importance of the

work of our Organization, under the enlightened guidance of Mr. Annan, in fostering an international atmosphere conducive to a more just, tolerant and mutually supportive world.

This is a gigantic and complex task, undertaken in the midst of enormous difficulties and risks and continually posing new challenges to our collective mind as we search for solutions to large and ever-growing problems that humanity must solve.

Now, when international peace and security are seriously threatened, that recent honour not only constitutes well-deserved recognition of a high degree of dedication to the cause of peace and the prevention and resolution of conflicts; it also bears a message of hope that the shining ideals of justice, democracy, human rights and development for all will shape the entire world to the benefit of future generations.

We in our country understand and properly appreciate the role and the importance of the United Nations. It was partly due to the persistent and unconditional support of the United Nations that our struggle for national liberation culminated in success, with the proclamation of our independence. It was certainly due to the support of the United Nations and its specialized agencies that Cape Verde has been able to take important steps on the road to development and show encouraging signs of progress, year after year, as documented in the *Human Development Reports* of the United Nations Development Programme.

The tragedy that recently struck the homeland of the United States of America, causing the loss of thousands of innocent lives and destroying one of the most prestigious landmarks in this city, can only be the object of our most vehement and total condemnation.

The United States is home to the largest overseas Cape Verdean community. That part of our diaspora has also felt violated by the barbarous attacks of 11 September, and along with them, my country and, indeed, all Cape Verdeans share in the mourning and the distress experienced by the American people and families of so many other nationalities.

Cape Verde has stood ready from the outset to support actions intended to combat terrorism, in the context of a broad international coalition under the auspices of the United Nations. Therefore, my Government is committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) to combat this scourge.

Important steps have already been taken, particularly regarding the endorsement of international anti-terrorism instruments.

We believe that all States have a moral and collective obligation to fight the perversion of the human spirit represented by this phenomenon. The seriousness and the scope of the 11 September terrorist acts show that, from now on, terrorism must be confronted resolutely, with appropriate responses and preventive action, in order to stem the criminal violence that masquerades as being prompted by political or religious motivations.

No country is safe from similar attacks or from attempts to use its own territory for the perpetration of terrorist acts. Therefore, any strategy designed to permanently eliminate this dangerous threat to international peace and stability must be a common one, with broad participation, in which the United Nations plays a crucial role.

In participating in the global effort to eliminate terrorism, the developing countries are, once again, at a serious disadvantage. On the one hand, their scarcity of resources and their lack of sophisticated means of detection and prevention make them more vulnerable to infiltration by terrorist organizations and to actions launched within their own borders. On the other hand, when they attempt to respond to demands from the international community, they are forced to mobilize resources that would otherwise be dedicated to their economic and social development and to meeting the basic needs of their peoples.

Added to this is the fact that, as was emphasized some days ago by the Secretary-General, the poorer economies are the ones that will pay most dearly for the direct consequences of the terrorist attacks on the world economy. My own country, which depends heavily on tourism revenues, is already feeling the repercussions of the worldwide crisis in the transportation and hospitality industries.

There is therefore a critical need for the international community to effectively help the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, to bear the added burden that the battle against terrorism is placing on their economies. The industrialized countries must display increased solidarity and generosity in assisting developing countries, since the effort that developing countries have agreed to make and the sacrifices imposed on

their populations will also benefit the industrialized nations.

A little more than a year ago, the Millennium Summit was held in this Hall. It drew approximately 150 heads of State or Government. The dialogue was active and innovative to an extent unprecedented in the history of the Organization. A tremendous variety of sectors of civil society participated directly. Not only did the Summit provide a succinct overview of the activities of the United Nations since its founding, it also constituted a unique opportunity to present an integrated picture of the strategic objectives for the twenty-first century, thereby opening new avenues for addressing the challenges of globalization.

The conclusions of the Summit rekindled the flame of hope among the peoples of the world, in particular among those who believe that it is possible to find effective ways of giving all countries real opportunities for development by improving their institutional and productive infrastructure and by creating an international atmosphere conducive to providing them with access to the means, both public and private, to fund their development. The drafting of the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/56/326) gives the international community a powerful tool for joining forces in the implementation of the major policy lines adopted at the Summit.

Important events have taken place since the Millennium Summit. Of particular interest were the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and the Durban World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Now, we are preparing to hold, in the near future, the International Conference on Financing for Development, a special Assembly session on children, and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The specific manner in which those issues affect the African continent, which is home to the great majority of the least developed countries, has certainly helped accelerate the decision-making processes with regard to regional integration, leading to important steps that may open the way to a more promising future, despite the clouds hanging over the international scene.

As we know, a complicated combination of endogenous and exogenous phenomena has left the African continent feeling increasingly marginalized. The pace of economic growth has not been able to reduce poverty significantly. Diseases such as malaria and AIDS continue to cut lives short at a frightening rate. Several countries are the scene of instability; many of them are engaged in armed conflicts and are experiencing terrorist activities that kill thousands of innocents, systematically destroy property, disrupt the operations of Governments and displace population groups. The scanty positive results from the many plans and initiatives conceived and implemented to deal with the serious problems Africa has faced over the years have resulted in well known and widespread dissatisfaction, both in the international community and among African leaders.

Yet, despite the rather discouraging international climate, Africa has taken important steps that may open the way to a more promising future. With a view to creating the instruments and mobilizing the will to face up to an increasingly complex global situation, African leaders proclaimed the African Union with a new vision for our continent. Moreover, they adopted the New Initiative for Africa, recently designated as the New Partnership for the Development of Africa, under which Africans assume full responsibility for eradicating poverty and putting their countries on the path of economic growth and development at the same time as they offer a partnership that is mutually beneficial to the international community in meeting the challenges of the new millennium.

The adoption of those two instruments and the firm commitment to promote transparent stewardship will surely open up new prospects for the establishment of peace, stability, democracy and development that can lead the continent to occupy the prominent place in the global economy that is justified by its immense potential.

Doubtless, there is a long road to travel before we achieve political integration based on democratic institutions and grounded in popular participation, good governance and action aimed at the promotion of sustainable development on the economic, social and cultural levels. But we believe that, with the emergence of new leadership dedicated to economic rebirth, with the consolidation of democracy and good governance and with the anticipated support of the international

community, conditions will be present for a fundamental and historic turnaround in Africa.

Two of the most critical problems faced by the Organization and by the African continent, whose solution cannot be postponed, now loom larger because of their interconnection and because of their bottleneck effect. I refer to poverty and armed conflicts. All available data reinforce our apprehensions about the success of the battle against poverty in the world. This makes it necessary to adopt a strategy to win that war, since attaining the objective of a 50 per cent reduction in the number of persons living in extreme poverty by 2015 appears ever more problematic. Without measures that can effectively reverse the process of socio-economic degradation and, especially, without political will on the part of the international community as a whole, that goal of the Millennium Summit cannot be achieved.

It is an undisputed fact that, as a rule, conflicts occur in countries that are marked by poverty. This cause-and-effect relationship has become a vicious circle that cannot be terminated without efficient coordination between the preventive diplomacy and social action of the United Nations on the one hand and more effective engagement by the industrialized countries on the other.

Despite the efforts of the international community, the United Nations and the Secretary-General towards peace and stabilization in international relations and towards democracy and human rights, certain regions of the world continue to be the scene of armed conflicts that threaten to spread and endanger peace and stability in those regions.

The terrorist acts of 11 September have added a new measure of instability, provoking an anti-terrorist military intervention in Afghanistan whose duration and consequences are difficult to assess.

The impasse in the search for a lasting solution to the Palestine question, which is primarily a result of the intransigence of Israel and the cycle of violence that has been set in motion, has created one of the most dangerous focal points of tension and a threat to world peace. The implementation of the Oslo Agreement must be resumed. Violence must be brought to an end and the internationally recognized rights of the Palestinians must be respected, including their right to their own State, while guaranteeing the Israeli people

the right to live in peace in their country within internationally recognized borders.

Africa, today the scene of the greatest number of armed conflicts, has taken some positive steps in the direction of peace, with the active involvement of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, many friendly countries and a number of multilateral actors, non-governmental organizations and elements of civil society. However the persistence of acts of violence, namely the perpetration of criminal acts against civilian targets, bears evidence that the road to political and social stabilization leading in turn to the restoration of peace is still long and difficult.

In Angola, for example, we have seen fresh outbreaks of armed action by UNITA, which continues to spread death and destruction. The Security Council once again strongly condemned the actions of the rebel movement, while maintaining its sanctions against that organization. But it is vital that all countries cooperate without reservation by denying UNITA the means to carry out its criminal actions, so that it can be persuaded to lay down its weapons and fully abide by the Lusaka Agreement.

Cape Verde is pleased at the success represented by the transition of East Timor towards independence, a process that constitutes a remarkable and exemplary success achieved by our Organization and particularly by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. From the very outset and in the most difficult moments, the Cape Verdean Government and people have always been on the side of the people of East Timor in their struggle for independence. We will celebrate this occasion together on 20 May 2002, when East Timor takes its destiny into its own hands and joins our great family here in the United Nations.

I conclude by expressing the hope that the outcome of this session may make an effective contribution to a better world, a more just and mutually supportive world of peace and cooperation and, especially, a world of tolerance and concord.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Modibo Sidibe, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali.

Mr. Sidibe (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to express our condolences to the Governments of the United States and the Dominican

Republic, and to the families of the victims of this morning's tragic plane crash.

I express my warmest congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I wish to assure him of my delegation's complete support in the exercise of his difficult and lofty mission. I am convinced that, with his experience and talents as a seasoned diplomat, he will guide our discussions to success. To his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, I would like to express my sincerest and warmest congratulations on the competence, dedication, effectiveness and authority that he displayed throughout his term of office, which was so rich in important events for the life of our Organization.

May I also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to the post of Secretary-General of our Organization, and I would like once again to express to him Mali's deepest appreciation for his steadfast efforts and his determination in the quest for a better world in the face of the many and complex challenges of the world of today. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and to Mr. Annan reflects the work accomplished by the Secretary-General over the past five years and is a source of legitimate pride to me as an African.

Our fifty-sixth session is of particular importance, being held as it is in the aftermath of the brutal terrorist attacks that plunged the American nation into mourning on 11 September 2001. The Government of Mali has firmly condemned these heinous acts and expressed its solidarity with the American people and its support for the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Mali has already taken the measures necessary for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), *inter alia*, through the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee in charge of implementing and coordinating international measures. We have also undertaken to ratify various conventions against terrorism in order to complete the vital legal arsenal that we need to make a complete contribution to the collective international efforts under the auspices of the United Nations, and also to regional actions. In this respect, in addition to the Organization of the Islamic Conference Convention on Combating International Terrorism, we appeal for the entry into force of the important Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of

Terrorism, adopted at Algiers in July 1999. We also call for an effective partnership with Africa to strengthen its capacity to combat terrorism.

The terrorist acts of 11 September, incompatible with the lofty and tolerant message of Islam, have clearly shown the vulnerability of our current international system and have emphasized the need for increased international cooperation in order to deal with this situation. This is why the tragic events of 11 September 2001 call for the action now being taken against terrorism, but they also mean that we must in the medium and long term reflect on the further ways of combating terrorism that we must devise. But above all, these events mean that we must endeavour vigorously to implement the Millennium Declaration programme of action in order to ensure prosperity for the largest possible number of people.

In this context, Mali advocates integrated, sustained global action in which the United Nations should play the primary role. While reiterating Africa's appeal for the holding of an international conference on terrorism, under the auspices of the United Nations, Mali intends to support the initiatives of the Secretary-General and of his Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, whom we congratulate on his appointment. Deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, we call for increased and coordinated emergency humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people.

The maintenance of peace and security requires strict control of weapons. Mali will actively and resolutely continue to support international and regional efforts in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The question of small arms, as we see it, is another source of concern. In fact, small arms contribute to the breakdown of the social balance, fuel conflicts and destabilize States, thus jeopardizing all development efforts.

Mali, which hosted the African preparatory conference, will work towards the success of a follow-up to the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and towards the full implementation of the Programme of Action resulting from that important Conference. The West African experience in this respect constitutes an important initiative to be supported through the declaration of an Economic

Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons and the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development in Africa.

The West African subregion remains characterized by the persistence of conflict, a high level of poverty, illicit trade in weapons and the proliferation of armed bands. In order to deal with these conflicts, ECOWAS has given priority to a regional approach for the prevention and management of conflicts in order to deal with the root causes of conflict and its humanitarian consequences. The ECOWAS protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, adopted in 1999, is a major tool for regional prevention and management of conflicts. Its innovations include its Mediation and Security Council, its early warning system and the fact that it is rooted in the consolidation and protection of democracy and human rights.

Mali welcomes and encourages the positive developments in the peace process in Sierra Leone that have taken place since the second meeting of the Committee of Six of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council with the United Nations, the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) on 2 May 2001 in Abuja, Nigeria.

Progress, although still fragile, has been made in the Mano River Union region. As evidence of this we can cite the ministerial meetings among the three countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS intends to continue its efforts to help make the Mano River Union a pillar of stability and development. The recent summit of heads of State and Government of ECOWAS on a global and comprehensive approach to security questions stresses once again the will of West Africa to shoulder its responsibilities, helped by its various partners.

The implementation of these initiatives and West African approaches to conflict prevention and management will require assistance from the international community, in particular the United Nations. In this respect, it is gratifying to note that a genuine partnership has been established between the United Nations and ECOWAS. We firmly encourage the establishment of the United Nations Office for West Africa, as recommended by the inter-institutional

mission that visited the region from 6 to 27 March 2001.

The special session of the General Assembly on children will be an opportunity to build a progressive and universalist vision in order to promote a "world worthy of children", with the participation of all, within the framework of a world movement for children. ECOWAS, which has prepared for that gathering, is continuing its efforts to implement the Accra plan of action on the situation of children in conflict with the opening of a special office entrusted with this question, the Optional Protocol that will soon be adopted on the sale of children and the regional initiative on joint vaccination days. In the near future, a decade for the culture of children's rights will be examined.

The creation of the International Criminal Court will not only make it possible to bring to trial the perpetrators of the gravest crimes against the dignity of the human person, but will also be an instrument of deterrence, which can thus contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, I recall that Mali has already ratified the Rome Statute, thus expressing its support for the struggle against impunity and for the full respect of human dignity. We appeal to others to help make the court a reality as early as next year.

In the field of human security, we must provide an appropriate response — a global and urgent response — to the scourge of HIV/AIDS following the special session of June 2001, while at the same time increasing our potential to fight malaria.

Our responsibility is great indeed with regard to the persistence of inequalities and the increase in poverty. The peoples of the world aspire to education, employment, health and nutritional self-sufficiency — in other words, they hope to attain more dignified and humane living conditions. In this context, Africa, which intends to make its union a reality, wants to become master of its own destiny. It needs solidarity to help it strengthen its capacities and mobilize its own development resources. We will work hard toward the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in May 2001. As was stated by President Konaré, that Conference, by the very fact that it was being convened, signalled progress

"... and it is also a test of the international community following the Millennium Declaration. There will be success only if we see a will to move to concrete action, if we envisage stronger and bolder measures to finance development, to increase the effectiveness of foreign aid and to resolve the problems that are hampering the sustainable development of the least developed countries."

The International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in Monterrey in March 2002, should be an important event and an interface for dialogue to find new means of contributing to the financing of development and to reaffirm the political will for concrete development objectives. This is why Mali believes that the Conference will have to lead to the adoption of a concise political declaration — a declaration with precise strategic objectives reflecting the collective will to act to resolve the problem of financing development and to lay the foundations for a real world partnership.

Africa is pleased that the high-level debate of the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which was held in Geneva in July, had as its theme "The role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development", and awaits the realization of the measures envisaged there. This role must not be merely a declared one — it must lead to concrete results. This is why we hope that the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is now under way in Doha, Qatar, will promote new progress and decisive initiatives to make it possible for Africa to develop its assets.

The entry into force of the African Union, whose constituent act was signed in Lomé on 12 July 2000, reflects the commitment of African leaders to the integration of our continent. In fact, the establishment of the African Union and the launching of the New Partnership for African Development, aimed at eliminating poverty through sustainable development, can help support the dynamics of regional integration. In this respect, we appeal to the international community to assist this African initiative, which is so promising for the future of the peoples of our continent.

Our Organization is, more than ever before, called to act to promote international peace and security and to achieve development for all. Here in the United Nations, we must act as full-fledged Member States, shapers of our shared future. We say this in order to recall our shared responsibility to bring about peace in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Great Lakes region — to mention just these cases — and to do justice to human nature. We share responsibility to manifest more solidarity and to provide assistance to resolve the many humanitarian crises that exist.

In the Middle East, the situation remains of concern because of the persistence of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. Mali firmly condemns the violence that has been suffered by the Palestinian people, and we believe that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace and the other relevant resolutions of the United Nations must serve as a basis for negotiations and the establishment of a just, global and lasting peace. We call for the resumption of these negotiations and reaffirm our unfailing attachment to the legitimate rights of the fraternal Palestinian people, including the right to the establishment of an independent State.

My delegation also expresses its hope that there will be a definitive lifting of sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

On the Korean peninsula, the region from which you come, my delegation hopes that the process of reconciliation now under way will experience further progress, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/11, thanks to autonomous and strengthened inter-Korean dialogue, and especially the holding of a second summit in the near future. In this spirit, my country will continue its action for the reconciliation and peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

Adapting the United Nations to the demands of our world is an urgent need. Mali remains convinced of the vital necessity of democratizing the United Nations and restructuring its main organs, making them more representative and credible. A democratization of the Security Council, whose structure no longer corresponds to the realities of the world, will help reflect the shared will to make that organ more effective, representative and legitimate. Along these lines, we reiterate the demands of Africa for an equitable allocation of the two categories of seats, in

accordance with the Harare Declaration and the decisions adopted by the heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity.

In conclusion, the peoples of the United Nations are watching us as we carry out the promises contained in the Millennium Declaration. We must build a new world — a world that reflects our intelligence, a world of justice, a world that embodies the essential values of all humanity.

The Acting President: I call on Her Excellency Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Niger.

Ms. Mindaoudou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): The fact that we are meeting under the presidency of one of the most eminent personalities of the Republic of Korea bears eloquent testimony to the positive changes in international relations and to the end of the ideological bipolarization of the world.

I would like at the outset to convey the condolences of the Republic of the Niger to the United States of America and the Dominican Republic for the tragedy that occurred this morning.

The Niger would like to warmly congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, as well as the other members of the Bureau. We are sure that he will demonstrate the same dynamism, energy and human qualities as his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, as he continues his outstanding work for the benefit of humankind.

I would like to reaffirm the warm congratulations of the Niger to our brother, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for his re-election to a post whose visibility, prestige and effectiveness he has done so much to enhance, as well as for the award of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize, which is a testimony — if further evidence were needed — to the global recognition of the work that he has already accomplished in the service of humanity.

This serves as an eloquent rebuttal to the arguments of all those who claim to find, in the denial of the fundamental principles of dialogue between cultures and nations — principles enshrined in the Charter — the high road to salvation. In this regard, the Niger endorses the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and welcomes the emergence of a general consensus on the need to wage

war against terrorism on a collective and global basis, within the framework of the international legality embodied by the United Nations.

If we are to succeed, the fight against terrorism must be based on a programme of international cooperation, including, in particular, substantial financial and technical assistance to the most disadvantaged States so as to enable them to make a significant contribution to that process.

Still on the subject of peace and security, I would like to point out that, within the realm of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we are in the final stages of the process of ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and of signing a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

With regard to conventional weapons, the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects fulfilled one of the commitments undertaken by our heads of State or Government in the historic Millennium Declaration. The Niger welcomes the fact that the Conference was able to adopt, by consensus, a Programme of Action to combat that scourge, which is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Furthermore, the Niger welcomes the fact that that Programme of Action took account of the principal concerns expressed by African States in the Bamako Declaration, by providing, in particular, financial and technical assistance measures for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

No part of the world has been spared the illicit trafficking in and circulation of small arms. But the developing countries, in particular those on the continent of Africa, are paying the highest price for the proliferation of small arms from the standpoint of their security, stability and development.

That is why the Economic Community of West African States moratorium on the manufacture, import and export of small arms, adopted in Abuja in October 1998, which was extended for three years on 5 July, as well as the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, should receive substantial financial support from the international community.

In this context, the Niger reaffirms its support for the proposal of the United Kingdom to create an international fund, to be managed by the United Nations Development Programme, for the collection of small arms. If it is effective, that fund will help to support regional and national projects for the collection and destruction of small arms in exchange for development projects. In this regard, I am pleased to reaffirm to the Assembly the gratitude of the Niger to the countries that participated in the work of the Group of Interested States on Practical Disarmament Measures.

Since the events of 11 September, the entire world has been assessing the tragic consequences of that Manichaean ideology. Terrorists are, without doubt, a threat to international peace and security. It has been claimed that those events were committed in the name of Islam. But as everyone knows, Islam is the religion of the golden mean, and condemns suicide and murder. It advocates dialogue and persuasion and the steadfast combating of any tendency towards individual or collective nihilism. That is one of the reasons why the Niger fully associates itself with the global coalition against terrorism. That is also why, during the recent discussions on measures to eliminate international terrorism, the Niger reiterated its firm condemnation of all forms of violence and its determination to commit itself to all subregional and international initiatives aimed at eradicating that scourge.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders undertook to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security by providing it with the necessary tools and resources to better prevent conflict, bring about the peaceful settlement of disputes and consolidate peace and post-conflict reconstruction. In order to be effective, a preventive conflict-management strategy, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General, requires the international community, working together with national and regional actors, to adopt a comprehensive approach encompassing political, diplomatic, humanitarian and institutional measures, and to undertake actions aimed at economic revitalization. As a follow-up to that report, last July in Agadez my country, acting within the national dynamic aimed at consolidating peace and with the support of the United Nations, organized a forum on conflict prevention — the first of its kind in Africa. That forum

recommended the elaboration of a national conflict-prevention strategy, the implementation of which would be coordinated by the National Commission for Social Dialogue, which brings together representatives of the State and civil society.

For too long, the international community's attention has been focused on the Middle East, where repeated efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict have ended in deadlock. The support of the G-8 for the idea of sending international observers to Palestinian territory is an important step forward; such action would guarantee the impartial application of the recommendations of the Mitchell report.

The Niger would like to reaffirm, here in the Assembly, that a lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be achieved without the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to an independent sovereign State. The Niger wholeheartedly supports the position of the United States of America in this regard.

With regard to the conflict in Western Sahara, the Niger supports the efforts of the United Nations, in particular those of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, to bring about a final settlement that is acceptable to interested and concerned parties.

With regard to Asia, the summit meeting that took place last July in India between the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India raised great hopes for a political settlement of the conflict in Kashmir. Such initiatives must be supported and encouraged so as to allow for the self-determination of the Kashmiri people as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

By according highest priority to the specific needs of Africa, the Millennium Summit recognized the full magnitude of the serious problems that beset our continent. Proof of this is that most African States are included on the list of least advanced and poorest countries and have been left behind by the technological revolution. The ravages caused by armed conflicts and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have affected more than 26 million Africans and wiped out the hard-won progress made over the past decade. At the same time, the flow of official development assistance to Africa has plummeted, while foreign direct investments have continued to stagnate. Worse yet, between 1999 and 2000 those investments even fell from \$10.5

billion to \$9.1 billion, while during the same period they rose in Asia and Central and Eastern Europe.

It is therefore urgent to increase the volume of official development assistance, to expand debt-cancellation initiatives, to improve the access of African exports to international markets and to promote investment. These measures must be accompanied by appropriate support for the efforts of the United Nations system because this Organization is the best forum for promoting new partnerships for the benefit of Africa.

In this respect, the Niger very much hopes that Africa's drive to reappropriate its own development will be encouraged. That drive is marked by the proliferation of national and regional initiatives, the most recent manifestation of which was the adoption at the Lusaka summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of an African development plan, the implementation of which the G-8 has decided to support.

The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development should prove to be a decisive turning point in the establishment of a more just and equitable world economic order. It should, *inter alia*, lead to the adoption of a clear political declaration defining strategic priorities, accompanied by a precise timetable, with respect to the strengthening of the capacities of the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, and their integration into the world economy. The Conference should be the point of departure of a broad world partnership to channel all energies towards the mobilization of resources for development and the reform of international financial structures.

In this regard, the 10-year Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries has made it possible to lay the foundations of an enhanced world partnership to achieve the economic growth essential to reducing poverty. Following the firm commitments undertaken in Brussels, there are now grounds for hope that, particularly with regard to trade, the current round of World Trade Organization negotiations in Qatar will take fully into account the interests of the least developed countries, whose 630 million inhabitants have a legitimate aspiration to benefit from the positive effects of globalization.

In the absence of an appropriate response from the affluent countries, the damage caused by the

HIV/AIDS epidemic may prove to be irreparable, given that some specialists estimate that there will be 100 million dead from that disease by the year 2010 if effective measures are not taken immediately to stem the scourge.

Need we recall, moreover, that malaria claims as many human victims in Africa as AIDS, particularly in West Africa? It is comforting to note, however, that the international community has finally become aware of the signal danger posed by that disease. The Niger welcomes the decision of the United Nations to proclaim the period 2001-2010 the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa. The United Nations is thus in step with the various initiatives of the OAU in the struggle against malaria, led by Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Mamadou Tandja of the Niger.

There can be no doubt that the struggle against major diseases calls for substantial resources and a strong capacity for coordinated action. The Niger therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's establishment of the Global AIDS and Health Fund, which should give a new dynamic to the struggle against AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, which together claim 5 million dead throughout the world every year.

The announcement made at the G-8 summit in Genoa that \$1.8 billion will be devoted to launching the Global Fund is an important step in the right direction. In spite of everything, a great deal remains to be done. According to United Nations estimates, approximately \$3 billion must be mobilized before 2001 for AIDS alone and contributions of \$7 billion to \$10 billion will be necessary every year thereafter until 2005. Thus, today more than ever, the international community must demonstrate active solidarity between rich and poor and a sense of unshakeable collective responsibility — in a word, unfailing political will — if it wishes to translate into deeds the Declaration of Commitment adopted at the special session on HIV/AIDS.

The progress achieved in the Niger in its current reform programme has allowed us to re-establish and consolidate the country's economic bases, to revive fruitful relations with the international financial institutions and thus to secure the Niger's eligibility for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Furthermore, the Niger recently established a new framework for the implementation of its own national

anti-poverty policy. A strategy for reducing poverty defines the country's priorities and measures and actions to be undertaken in order to achieve the targets set in various spheres, which will allow us to make serious inroads into poverty by 2015.

This struggle against poverty in the Niger enjoys the highest political involvement. A programme initiated personally by the President of the Republic, Mr. Mamadou Tandja, is designed to improve the living standards of the people of our country. The first phase of what is known as "The Programme of the President of the Republic" has already led to the construction of 1,000 wells, 100 mini-dams, 100 schools and 100 health centres for rural communities. It is well known that such communities in the Niger suffer intractable illiteracy, a serious lack of infrastructure and cyclical food shortages caused by irregular rainfall. The Programme also stresses the link between poverty and the environment. It is in that context that we plan to plant 1 million trees throughout our national territory by the end of this year.

The Government is thus perfectly in step with the deep-rooted aspirations of the people of the Niger, who recognize in its actions their ancestral lore of personal and collective effort against adversity, and with its bilateral and multilateral partners, whose ongoing concern is the restoration of the environment. All the institutions of the United Nations family and the European Union — in particular France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain — as well as Canada and Japan, have contributed significantly to reviving the ecological system and to combating desertification in the Niger.

In the Niger, we are fully aware that this fight is primarily a national one. We wage it through volunteerism, the roots of which are deeply entrenched in our traditions and extend beyond our frontiers. I take this opportunity to reiterate the profound gratitude of the Niger to all the bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and our other development partners, for their precious support for the efforts of the Government to promote the well-being of our people.

To conclude, I would say that the international community needs a strong United Nations to achieve the ambitious objectives set forth in the Charter and to

implement the Millennium Declaration. It is therefore necessary to give unstinting support to the Secretary-General in his efforts to reform the Organization, strengthen its role and secure the resources that will allow him to accomplish his task effectively. The United Nations remains indeed the only institution capable of bringing about the new world order to which we all so deeply aspire.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdul Aziz Bin Nasser Al-Shamsi, chairman of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to express how deeply saddened we are over the crash of the American Airlines aircraft a few hours ago, a few miles away from this Headquarters, in the borough of Queens in New York City. Let me express our deep condolences to the families of the victims and to our friends in this country.

I have the honour to convey to Mr. Han Seung-soo, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. His election to this high office shows the high regard the international community has for him personally as well as for his friendly country, South Korea, with which my country maintains good relations. We are confident that thanks to his experience in international affairs the Assembly will achieve positive results, and we wish him and his staff every success.

Let me also extend my thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the valuable efforts he exerted in conducting the work of the previous session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his re-election for a second term to this high office and on being awarded, together with the United Nations Organization, the Nobel Peace Prize. We would like to convey to him our appreciation for his persistent efforts, which are bound to contribute to enabling the Organization to accomplish its lofty mission of maintaining international peace and security and achieving sustainable international development.

This session is being held at a very critical stage, when the United States of America has been subjected to the most horrific and dangerous forms of organized

terrorism that not only targeted the lives of thousands of innocent civilian men, women and children, but also the moral codes and values underlying the human and cultural principles that are enshrined in the Charter, the norms of international law and the foundations and concepts of the legal, political, economic and social institutions that shape the nature of our international relations as a whole.

The United Arab Emirates, which was deeply shocked after this reprehensible, immoral and criminal act, reiterates today its strong denunciation and condemnation of these savage acts and all other forms of terrorism, wherever they may be. They constitute the clearest challenges to international peace and security in the twenty-first century. We also announce our complete support for and cooperation with the United States Government as well as all the regional and international efforts aimed at tracking down the perpetrators of these brutal acts, bringing them to justice. We also stress our readiness to contribute to any international campaign aimed at eliminating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. At the same time, we call upon the international community to strengthen the mechanisms and scope of relief aid for the Afghan people, who have been afflicted by brutal wars for over two decades and who presently face the most horrible and unprecedented internal displacement.

The changes that we are witnessing in the nature of international relations today, and the accompanying accelerated trends in the fields of globalization, technology, modern communications and economic openness have not only had a positive impact on the lives and interests of certain States and peoples but have rather contributed to widening the security, economic, social, cultural and information gap and differences between the peoples of the developed and the developing countries. At the same time, they have helped to spawn new situations of conflict, civil and ethnic wars and transnational problems. Accordingly, we believe that the first steps to be taken to confront the totality of these problems require, primarily, finding a clear, comprehensive and balanced strategy of regional and international cooperation that takes into consideration, as a matter of priority, the extent to which the concept of international security and peace, on the one hand, and the problems of humanitarian need and sustainable development, on the other, are linked.

In this context, we stress the importance of the assumption by the United Nations, in cooperation and coordination with other regional organizations, of a larger role in international affairs. We believe in dialogue and peaceful negotiations as an ideal approach for resolving disputes. We therefore look forward to a response from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the call by the United Arab Emirates to find a peaceful settlement to the occupation of our three islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Moussa, either through direct negotiations or by referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice to be resolved on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the principles of international law.

We also hope that the visit to Tehran of His Excellency Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, on 23 July 2001, and that of Mr. Mohamed Ali Abtahi, the Iranian President's envoy, to Abu Dhabi on 6 August 2001, will contribute to the serious efforts being made to find a peaceful solution to the issue of Iran's occupation of our three islands, promote confidence-building and enhance the principle of peaceful coexistence, mutual cooperation and good-neighbourliness.

Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates would like once again to welcome the acceptance by the two fraternal States of Qatar and Bahrain of the decision of the International Court of Justice on the settlement of their previous disagreement over the disputed areas. It also notes with satisfaction the arrangements made for the demarcation of the boundaries between some countries of the region and stresses that continuation of such an approach and peaceful trends in international relations will strengthen the foundations of regional and international peace and security.

The question of Iraq has been taken up by the United Nations for 11 years and the Iraqi people are still suffering from the continuation of the international economic sanctions imposed on them. Although the oil-for-food programme has helped alleviate the suffering of certain sectors of Iraqi society, it clearly does not constitute the practical mechanism required to contain and deal with the human tragedies and far-reaching destructive effects that these sanctions continue to inflict, not only on the infrastructure and institutions of the basic services sectors of the Iraqi people, but also with regard to people's most elementary necessities, including nutritional, medical, educational and other care. We therefore call for a

political formula acceptable to all the parties concerned that will ensure that the sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people are lifted and, at the same time, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq are maintained.

The re-establishment of normal ties between Iraq and Kuwait requires efforts to resolve the problems that have arisen as a result of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in 1990, the most important of which is the return of Kuwaiti nationals and others held hostage or as prisoners of war, in accordance with international resolutions.

We welcome the Security Council resolution last September to lift the international sanctions imposed on our brother country Sudan. We also demand that the Security Council follow the same procedures in regard to the international sanctions imposed on our fraternal country Libya, especially now that its Government has completely fulfilled its commitments under the relevant Council resolutions.

Since 28 September of last year, the occupied Palestinian territories have seen human tragedies and acts of violence because of the policy of State terrorism pursued by Israel against the Palestinian people, including re-occupation of territories, expansion of settlements, escalation of bombing and destruction of economic and physical infrastructure in the Palestinian territories, in addition to systematic liquidation and massacres that have claimed the lives of more than 1,300 martyrs and tens of thousands of other innocent casualties, half of whom are children and women.

The United Arab Emirates warmly welcomes the announcement made by President Bush three days ago in which he committed his country to helping establish peaceful coexistence between two States, Israel and Palestine. Once again, we fully support the right of Palestinians to self-determination and to establish their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. In addition, we strongly condemn all flagrant violations by Israel against the brotherly Palestinian people.

We call upon the United Nations — especially the Security Council and its permanent members — in particular the United States, and European Union members to take all necessary and effective measures to avoid bias and double standards and to bring pressure to bear on Israel to end immediately all its terrorist acts of aggression against Palestinians, their towns and holy sites. In this connection, we call for the establishment, without delay, of an international

mechanism to provide the necessary protection for the Palestinian people.

The attainment of security and just and comprehensive peace and stability in the Middle East requires that Israel comply strictly with the agreements and protocols it has concluded within the framework of the peace process and relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Those resolutions all call upon Israel to withdraw completely from all Palestinian and other Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, the Syrian Arab Golan and the Shab'a farms in Lebanon. They also call for the removal of existing settlements and the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes.

Israel's possession of prohibited weapons, especially nuclear weapons, is a direct threat to regional and international peace and security. We therefore renew our call on the international community to pressure the Israeli Government to dismantle its dangerous arsenal of weapons. We would also like to emphasize that comprehensive international disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, and improving international mechanisms and arrangements for non-proliferation have top priority in the area of regional and international security concerns. We also call upon nuclear States and States that continue to pursue the acquisition of such weapons to end such dangerous policies, which threaten regional and international peace and security.

We are following with deep concern the political and military events that have erupted in many regions, particularly in South and South-East Asia, certain African countries and the Balkans. We therefore stress the need for the parties concerned to muster the necessary political will and to try to resolve their problems and disputes by resorting to dialogue and peaceful means, and on the basis of the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions.

Despite the encouraging rates of economic growth and recovery achieved by some countries in the last few years as a result of the information revolution, globalization and the formidable technological developments in the fields of communications and free markets, international reports and statistics have recently indicated a slow-down in global economic growth due to the lack of a clear strategy for regional and international economic cooperation. That slow-down has in turn aggravated the economic imbalance

between the countries of the North and those of the South. While the countries of the North enjoy prosperity, those of the South continue to suffer from poverty, unemployment, disease and environmental pollution.

Therefore the United Arab Emirates, which is accustomed to extending financial development investment and humanitarian assistance to many developing countries and countries affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts, calls upon developed countries and international specialized agencies to increase both their official and unofficial assistance to developing countries. It is equally important that

official development assistance to poor countries be increased so as to alleviate the foreign debt burden, to help those countries secure access to world markets for their domestic products, to facilitate the transfer of peaceful technologies, and to assist them in containing their growing domestic problems so as to combat poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and the spread of disease.

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations on the items on the agenda at this session will produce positive results that will enhance confidence-building measures and ensure security and stability in this world of numerous and quickly changing variables.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.